00026961

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016

THE PRINCIPLES

OF

POPULATION.

"Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."—GEN. i. 28.

"Thou shalt do justice and love mercy."—MATTHEW.

PRINTED BY JOHN STARK, EDINBURGH.

THE

PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION,

AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH

HUMAN HAPPINESS.

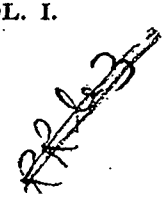
BY

ARCHIBALD ALISON, F.R.S.E.

ADVOCATE, SHERIFF OF LANARKSHIRE,
AND AUTHOR OF HISTORY OF EUROPE DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



26961
ac.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS, EDINBURGH:
AND THOMAS CADELL, LONDON.
M.DCCC.XL.

201.32
Ali/Pri
26961

PREFACE.

THE world, in the general case, is little interested in the motives which induce an author either to give or withhold a composition from publication, and he has no title to obtrude his reasons in a matter of such inconsiderable importance upon the public. But in the peculiar case of a writer who has already commenced and is far advanced in a work of more than ordinary magnitude and difficulty, and where an obligation of the strongest kind to devote his whole leisure time to its completion, has been contracted by the signal and undeserved favour with which it has been received, the case is different. When the author reflects on the fact, that three editions of the first seven volumes of the "History of Europe during the French Revolution" had issued from the press before the eighth was published, and that the work has been translated into

French and German, before it was even completed in its own language,—he feels that some apology is due, at least to the purchasers of that voluminous composition, for the publication of any other treatise, which might have the appearance even of distracting his attention from the completion of his prior undertaking.

The first draft of the present work on the Principles of Population was composed in the years 1809 and 1810, when the author, having just terminated his philosophical studies at the University, was led anxiously to inquire into the truth of those doctrines in regard to the tendency of population to press upon the means of subsistence, which were then making a great impression from the deserved celebrity of Mr Malthus's writings, and have since commanded such general consent from political philosophers. An early and highly valued friend, whose great abilities have since deservedly raised him to the first place at the Bar of Scotland,* to whom the work was communicated two years afterwards, strongly advised the author to prepare it for publication even at that early period; and from 1812 to

* John Hope, Esq. Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, late Solicitor-General for Scotland.

1819, was accordingly spent, partly in the remoulding of it, with a view to engrossing in its pages, the great additions which more extensive reading and subsequent reflection naturally suggested,—partly in repeated and extensive travelling over the British islands and the Continent, with a view to ascertain whether the views it contained, and which were so much at variance with what generally obtained credit in the world, were borne out by experience. And when more extended observation and reflection left no doubt in his mind that his principles were well founded, not only in general, but in their application to every branch of social policy, there remained the more important task of condensing his materials, which by this time had swelled out to an inordinate bulk, into a reasonable compass. The attempt to effect this object soon showed that the whole must be re-written, which was accordingly begun in 1819; but it proved a task of such labour from the contraction which had become necessary, that, amidst a multitude of official and professional engagements, it was not till the end of 1828 that the work was completed in its present form.

At this period, however, the author perceived with regret, that the time for publication at that time, at least, and, as he then thought,

for more than his own lifetime, had gone past. Constitutional changes of the most important kind had already commenced, or were loudly called for, in this country; political regeneration, or selfish interest, occupied every head and heart in France; the agitation of the public mind in both countries was excessive, and presaged but too surely the coming storm; and the author saw clearly that, amidst the whirl of party ambition and the visions of political regeneration, the speculations of one who proposed to better the condition of mankind by the good old method of "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and preaching the Gospel to the poor," were not likely to meet with much attention. Consigning, therefore, the present manuscript, as he conceived, to oblivion for his own lifetime, he contented himself with recommending his executors to publish it when the progress of events should render it likely to be of any utility to mankind; and eight days after it was finished, viz. on January 1, 1829, he commenced the "History of Europe during the French Revolution," which has since occupied every instant of his leisure time, in order to contribute his humble efforts to those of other and abler men, in warning the world of the consequences likely to ensue from the political tempest which was so evidently approaching.

The subsequent progress of events has, however, contrary to his expectation, led him to doubt whether the period for the publication of the present work has not now arrived. The ardent desire for general improvement, in part exhausted in the pursuit of organic alteration in the structure of society, has at length turned into a different channel, and human advancement has been found by experience to depend rather on social amelioration than political change. The accumulated evils of a large portion of the labouring classes in both islands, have drawn the attention of the benevolent in every part of the empire to the means of their removal; while the political and personal danger to the state, and all its members, from the misdirected passion for change so unhappily prevalent in the manufacturing districts, has forcibly roused the anxiety of all classes in the community. Contrary to the principles of recent economical philosophy, poor-laws have been established, though hitherto on a most imperfect scale, in Ireland; and, despite all the prepossessions of the most influential members of the Legislature in favour of the reciprocity system, the national mind has become strongly roused to the incalculable and far preferable advantages of colonization.

The impression produced by the growth of

these changes in national thought, and the favourable reception which some of his views on detached points, embraced in the present work, met with from the public in various forms,* had for some years induced the author to contemplate, at no distant period, the publication of the whole; but the extraordinary pressure arising from his official duties, and the research and labour unavoidable in the prosecution of his History, rendered him unwilling to embark in the task, even of revising the press, till that undertaking was concluded. The vivid and universal anxiety, however, excited by the late proceedings of the Chartists, and the revelations of social distress and degradation to which they have led, as well as the general and well-deserved interest awakened by the late admirable publication on the Poor in Scotland, by the author's nearest relative,† whose long experience had given him such ample means of judging of the causes which really depress or relieve the humblest classes, have left no doubt in his mind, that the time has

* Particularly on Colonization and the Reciprocity System: the present chapter on which is in a great degree printed from a speech delivered by the author at the public dinner given at Glasgow, to the first settlers who left the Clyde for New Zealand, on October 22d 1839. It was entirely extempore, as the author had at the time no leisure for preparation, which may account for the peculiar style of its composition, especially in the last sixteen pages.

† Dr Alison, Professor of the Institutes of Medicine in the University of Edinburgh.

now arrived when, if his researches were to be of any service to mankind, they should no longer be withheld. He was confirmed also in the soundness of his general principles on the subject of population, and the motives intended by Nature for its regulation, by their exact and striking coincidence with those which long observation and unwearied research had impressed upon his brother in reference to the legal relief of the poor, as well as the results which seventeen years official investigation into crime in Scotland had furnished to himself. Impressed with these ideas, he has, with no small effort, now finally prepared his manuscript for the press; but though he sees no reason to regret the long delay which has taken place in its publication, from the vast variety of illustrations which subsequent experience has afforded to his doctrines, time has made no changes on his general views; and the whole principles of the work, as well as their application to the management and relief of the poor, and their explanation of the causes of human distress, in all countries, are now delivered to the public as they occurred to himself thirty years ago.

Widely as the present work differs in its details, and the topics it embraces, from that already before the public, the attentive reader

will perhaps discover the same general views in the principles enforced in both; and regard this publication as rather a supplement to, than a separate work from, the History of Europe during the French Revolution.

In the annals of that awful convulsion, and its consequences on the subsequent transactions of mankind, it was the object of the author to unfold the moral laws which regulate the political affairs of nations, and illustrate the secret working of Supreme Intelligence, acting through the voluntary acts of free agents on the mighty theatre of human events. He has endeavoured to trace, through an infinite variety of details, military, political, and diplomatic, the provision made by Providence, both for the moral retribution of nations, and the general advancement of the species; and to show that, while signal wickedness or strenuous performance of duty, by communities or their rulers, seldom fail in the end, even in this scene of probation, to work out their appropriate reward or punishment, the Great Architect of the Universe overrules both, to the ultimate good of man, and builds up, alike from the wisdom and folly, the virtues and vices of men, amidst the chastisement and reward, the elevation and destruction of nations,—the mighty fabric of general and progressive improvement.

But political events,—the wars of nations, the contests of power, the rivalries of cabinets,—constitute but a part, though a most important part, of the moral powers which act upon mankind. Social circumstances, less observed, and of slower growth, are both more lasting and more irremediable in their effects. After the whole efforts of the warrior, the statesman, and the diplomatist, have been exhausted,—after the annals of victory and defeat, of glory and humiliation have been recounted, —it is evident that the most important springs of human prosperity or misery, improvement or degradation, remain behind: and that another and a less apparent set of causes has been throughout in operation, which often confounds the intentions of the rulers, and at times aggravates the sufferings, at others mitigates the distresses of mankind. It is these causes which it is the object of the present work to unfold.

It is the aim of the author in the following pages to show, that the same Invisible Hand and Irresistible Agency directs and pervades the social destinies of the species; that in the progressive changes which occur in the desires and habits, that is, the moving springs of mankind, are to be found the nicest adoption of the ruling principle at all

periods, to the circumstances in which the race is placed, and their ultimate advancement; that there is no permanent or lasting cause of distress which presses on the human species in any changes of its progress; that the deviations from this order, which are everywhere conspicuous, arise from the errors, the sins, and the corruptions of men; that in the consequences of these iniquities, however, there is established an unseen agency, destined for their ultimate removal or punishment; and that the only means of avoiding that otherwise inevitable retribution, is to be found in the general adoption by man, in his social relation with man, not less than by nation in its political intercourse with nation, of those principles of Justice and Benevolence which are unfolded in the Christian dispensation.

In both the same provision is to be observed for the combination of justice to individual man or separate nations with the progressive advancement of the species; and the author will not deem his labour and reflection for thirty years thrown away, if they are instrumental in any degree in illustrating the intentions of God in the moral works of Nature; and if they tend to deduce, from an infinity of details, military, political, and historical, in the one work, and statistical, geographical, and

economical in the other, the common principles of SUPREME WISDOM, HUMAN CORRUPTION, SPIRITUAL REGENERATION, AND CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

A. ALISON.

POSSIL HOUSE, LANARKSHIRE.
June 23*d* 1840.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INCREASE OF MANKIND IN EARLY TIMES.

Importance and variety of the subject of the Work—Its connection with History, Politics, and Social Welfare, and with the Constitution of Human Nature as developed in Revelation—Necessity of a change in the rate of Increase in the progress of Society—Law of increase in the Hunter and Fisher state—In Pastoral Nations—In the early Agricultural state—Importance of the Nomad Habits in producing the early dispersion of Mankind—Principles of expansion provided for civilized Man—The spirit of Commerce, and energy of Democracy—Contrast between the early powers of Man over Nature and those of civilized life.—P. 1–32.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATION BETWEEN POPULATION AND AGRICULTURAL SUBSISTENCE.

The Labour of one Man is capable of raising more than is sufficient for his own support—And this holds with any number of men employed in cultivation—And in every stage of society—Argument of Mr Malthus on this subject disproved by the recent progress of population in the British Islands, and their obvious capability of yielding a vast and rapid increase of Subsistence—Same inference results from the present state and capabilities of France—Superiority of the power of Production to Population—Can alone explain the origin of the Arts and of Commerce—And the increasing powers of Agriculture in the later stages of society—And the increase of Capital in these later stages—Vast additional numbers the world is capable of maintaining—Argument from the examples of China, Hindostan, and Japan cited by Mr Malthus—Barrier which the increase of Luxury opposes to the increase of the human race to their extreme limits in any country—Reasons why the progress of the human race is so slow, and so much within the powers of its increase and maintenance—Causes of the errors which have prevailed on this subject.—33–82.

CHAPTER III.

On the Changes in the Progress of Society which limit the Principle of Increase.

Necessity for the Growth of Restraints on the Principle of Increase, as Society advances—They arise accordingly from the developement of the Reason of Man—Effects of general instruction on the rate of Increase—From the influence of artificial Wants—Their vast and progressive importance—From the desire of accumulating Property and bettering one's condition—From the distinction of ranks and the desire of rising in the world—From the diminished fecundity of marriages in mature life—And the mortality of great cities—Importance and progresssive operation of these limitations to Population.—83–144.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Circumstances in the Progress of Society which limit the Demand for Labour.

Changes in the condition of Society which limit the demand for Labour—Alteration in the employment of Capital, its important effect in this way—From the change in the direction of Wealth from productive to unproductive employments—From the fall in the value of Money in all opulent States—From the introduction and improvement of Machinery which supersedes human labour—From the multiplication of Animals and Luxury, and the growth of a superior mode of living among all classes—Proof from statistical facts that these changes are consistent with the highest degree of well-being among the people.—145–224.

CHAPTER V.

On the Modification which these Principles have received from the Influence of Human Corruption.

Modification which these principles have received from the corruption of Mankind—From Human Weakness—From unavoidable Misfortune, Human Folly or Depravity—From the oppression of Government—Double effect of oppression sometimes diminishing, sometimes augmenting the tendency to increase—Opposite effect of good Government and virtuous habits—Characteristic difference of the European and Asiatic Governments—Fatal effect of Asiatic Despotism on the action of Population—Action of the principle of Increase in these countries—Importance of such unlimited action in these circumstances to the Fortunes of Mankind, and its coincidence with the happiness of individuals in these communities.—225–254.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF DECAY AND RENOVATION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

Necessity for some check to Human Depravity and Increase in many states —Provision for it in the decay of National Virtue and Courage—Prodigious ravages of War in ancient times—Necessity for such destruction at intervals of the species—Difference in modern times—Principles of Renovation and increased vigour which are there conspicuous, which render the destruction of Empires unnecessary as long as they continue—Chances of their longer endurance—Causes of Corruption incident to Free States—Spirit of Faction and rapid decay of public Virtue from Democratic Ascendency—Final Cause of these Laws of Nature.—255–306.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN THE EAST.

General character of Oriental Oppression—Action of the Principle of Increase in the Turkish Empire—In the Grecian Islands—In Egypt—In Barbary and Lybia—In Syria and Asia-Minor—In Hindostan—In China—In Japan—In Persia and Affganhistaun.—307–408.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN EUROPE.

General character of the situation of the People in Europe—Action of the Principle of Increase in France—In Switzerland—In Flanders and Holland—In Sweden and Norway—In Russia—In Poland—In Italy—In the Spanish Peninsula—In Germany—In Ireland—In Great Britain.—409–541.

CHAPTER IX.

ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Vast Extent and boundless capacity of the American Continent—Extraordinary vigour and animation of the Anglo-American race—Its rapid progress—Causes of that advance—Influence of the Democratic Spirit in producing it—General well-being and yet discontented condition of the American Population—Reflections on the probable future rate of its Increase, and the ultimate destinies of that part of the world.—542–561.

APPENDIX, 563.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POPULATION, AND THEIR CONNECTION WITH HUMAN HAPPINESS.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE INCREASE OF MANKIND IN EARLY TIMES.

ARGUMENT.

Importance and variety of the subject of the Work—Its connection with History, Politics, and Social Welfare, and with the Constitution of Human Nature as developed in Revelation—Necessity of a change in the rate of Increase in the progress of Society—Law of Increase in the Hunter and Fisher state—In Pastoral Nations—In the early Agricultural state—Importance of the Nomad Habits in producing the early dispersion of Mankind—Principles of expansion provided for civilized Man—The spirit of Commerce, and energy of Democracy—Contrast between the early powers of Man over Nature and those of civilized life.

ALTHOUGH the subject of population, or the varying laws of human increase, in different periods of society, has not hitherto received the same attention, either from philosophers or practical statesmen, with those which more immediately bear upon the wealth of nations or the increase of public resources, yet it is in reality both a more important and a nobler subject. The acquisition of comfort, the production of wealth, the growth of luxuries, form a part only, and, in a moral view, an inconsiderable part of the destiny of

man. Riches are not always essential to happiness, either in nations or individuals; wealth may accumulate and men decay; poverty and suffering may reanimate the species, and awaken again, after the slumber of centuries, the sacred fire upon which the real welfare of the race depends. Although the subject of national wealth, and the means of increasing it, is unquestionably of very high importance, yet the exclusive direction of national attention to the objects which it embraces, can hardly fail to be attended in the end with pernicious consequences; and as it leads man aside from the *real* end and aim of his being, it is constantly attended, if exclusively engrossing the national thought, with those premonitory symptoms which warn him that he has gone astray.

But the subject of population embraces a wider range, and is intimately wound up both with more vital and more exalted consequences. It treats of the great spring in human affairs; the moving power which, from the earliest times, has forced on the multiplication of the species; from which alike the progress, the happiness, and the sufferings of nations have taken their origin, and with the action of which the happiness of man from the first to the last ages of his progress is indissolubly united. In treating of this subject, we are not confined merely to a speck of time, nor in danger of being absorbed by the pressing interests of present existence; our vision is carried backward to the earliest, and forward to the most distant ages; the vast course of human events is unfolded to our view; and the present moment, with all its interests and anxieties, is felt only to be an unit in the stream of Time, and important chiefly as it leads us by

the right or the wrong channel into the great ocean of Eternity.

Important as the means of providing for human comfort or opulence undoubtedly are, errors committed in these respects are not fatal in their consequences. Their injurious effects speedily make themselves known; and by affecting the patrimonial interests of the most influential classes in the community, cannot fail, ere long, if free discussion is at all permitted, to suggest the appropriate remedy. But the consequences of mistaken principles being entertained or carried into practice, in regard to the increase of mankind, are at once more pernicious, more irremediable, and less liable to detection. A diseased action in the principle of population; the production of an augmentation of human beings at a time when the circumstances of society require that their numbers should be stationary; the multiplication of misery and suffering throughout the community by the removal of the limitations which nature has provided for the regulation of the principles of increase: the excesses of tyranny, which dry up the sources of subsistence, and close for a season the fountains of human increase, produce effects of a wide spread and durable kind, and which cannot be repaired, except in the lapse of ages. Unjust institutions, mistaken policy, here act in the first instance at least, not upon the rich, but upon the poor; not upon the intelligent, but upon the ignorant; not upon the powerful, but upon the oppressed. They work out in general their own cure; but they do so only after the lapse of centuries, and by the force of disaster which, springing from the lower, at length spreads upward to the highest classes

in the state. Generations pass away while the evil has been working unobserved in the humbler ranks of society; and political calamity, sometimes irremediable, is in the end experienced by all classes from the fatal neglect at an earlier period of those principles of just government and moral and religious cultivation, which are essential to the due developement of the combined material and spiritual frame of man.

Great as have been the inroads which in every age have been made on the benevolent intentions of nature, by the effects of human iniquity or corruption, there may yet be traced by the careful observer the operation of a mysterious agency, which in the end brings good out of evil; which compels the vices and passions and disorders of men to work out the purposes of Divine administration; which, in the punishment of national sins, provides the means of human amelioration; and by bringing a just retribution on the guilty states, opens the way for the expansion of mankind under fairer auspices, and directed by more elevated principles of conduct. In the working out of this vast and unceasing system of Divine administration, the principle of population is perhaps the most powerful and universal agent. Forcing mankind continually forward, it induces at one period an increase of the species under circumstances of difficulty, when its fortunes appear all but desperate; impels them at another into those charnel-houses of mortality—great cities—where the human race, constantly pressing on, is still unable to maintain its numbers. The cruelty and oppression which in many monarchies, as we see now in Asia, thin the human species, and occasion serious alarms for the ex-

tinction of man in his most favoured regions, paralyse the strength of these destructive governments, and prepares the downfal of the institutions and the religion from which this injustice has arisen. The arbitrary distinctions or unjust oppression which, in the western world, have in more than one nation engendered a vast and redundant population, by giving men the means of subsistence, and depriving them of those of comfort, are exposed to a similar, perhaps greater danger, by the expansive force of the very multitude which, by inducing a diseased action in the principles of population, they have been instrumental in producing. Thus, not only social welfare, but political fortune and national existence are indissolubly wound up with the subject of human increase; and as the desire from which it takes its rise is the most universal and powerful, next to those essential to the life of the individual, which acts upon man, so it has in every age exercised the most predominant influence, both upon the happiness of men and the destiny of nations.

It is perhaps of still greater practical importance that the subject of population is blended in its most essential principles with the moral elevation, and religious improvement of mankind. Neglected as this subject hitherto may have been, and dependent as human happiness may have been thought to be on an unvarying law, a stern necessity, which consigns in every age the mass of mankind to indigence and misery; it will yet be found upon a more careful examination, that, although without doubt a certain degree of suffering is the destiny of all in every rank in this world, yet by far the greatest and most active causes of human woe in every age are to be found in the ef-

fects of human wickedness. In the institutions which restrain the knowledge, or degrade the employment, or debase the moral condition of the poor; in the oppression of the humbler ranks by the powerful and affluent on the one hand, and the violence and crimes of popular insurrection on the other; have been found in every age the most prolific source, not only of present evil or suffering, but of the engendering of that diseased action of the principle of increase which perpetuates it through a succession of ages, and at last, by the very excess of evil, induces its removal. The only effectual means, on the other hand, either of promoting the present interests of the body of the people, or bringing the principle of increase in such a manner under control as to secure their durable welfare, is to establish generally those principles of tempered freedom, just administration, and religious instruction, upon which their present welfare has been found by experience to be so intimately connected. And thus the subject of population, when rightly understood, is in fact dependent on the same principles, and leads to the same conclusions, with those which are drawn from the consideration of the subsisting interests of the present generation; and after all the efforts of philosophy on this interesting matter have been exhausted, it will be found, that the happiness and greatness of nations spring from no other source, but the integrity and virtue of the individuals of whom they are composed; and that "to do justice, and to love mercy," constitutes the true secret of social amelioration, and embraces the whole political wisdom, as well as the whole moral duty of man.

Nothing, it may be thought, could be added to aug-

ment the importance or solemnity of a subject fraught with such interests, and of such importance to the best interests of humanity. But there are yet greater things than these, and the subject of human increase brings out in the clearest manner, in every age of mankind, the operation of that Supreme Wisdom in the creation and government, and mixed constitution of good and evil in the conduct and character of man which is announced in the Book of Genesis, and the perpetual recurrence to which forms the distinguishing character of the Books of Revelation. If we examine only the physical situation of mankind, he appears literally placed in the paradise of nature, surrounded with a territory which is boundless; teeming with riches which are inexhaustible; and endowed with faculties which enable him to rise superior to every difficulty, to acquire the mastery over physical nature, and not only to replenish the world, but to subdue it. If we examine his moral constitution, we shall find a similar, and perhaps a still more striking adaptation of his varied wants and dispositions to the varying circumstances in which, in the progress of society, he is placed; impelling at one period an unlimited increase, when his numbers, in danger of perishing from the hardships of the savage state, appear lost in the immensity of nature, and gradually coming under the influence of increasing limitations, as the human race becomes more abundant,—the means of providing for an indefinite increase more restricted,—and when the circumstances of society require that the rate of increase should be accommodated to a stationary or declining order of things. If the physical bounty of Nature, or the moral adaptation of the laws of increase to the varying destiny of human nature, be abstractly

considered, the same order and benevolence is at once conspicuous, as prevails in the laws of the physical world.

But if from these sublime considerations we turn to the actual condition of mankind, as portrayed in the history of the species, we shall have every reason to conclude, that a very different agency has been at work in human affairs. We shall there see the intentions of nature too often counteracted by the effects of human wickedness, and the laws destined for the regulation of population continually thwarted by the unjust desires or grasping propensities of men. In one age we discern the mass of mankind borne to the earth by the weight of oppression, and the human race accumulating, even in the most advanced stages of society, like the beasts of the forest, without any other limit to their numbers but the physical inability to gain subsistence. In another, the fairest hopes of humanity, and the best interests of society, overthrown by the atrocious wickedness of revolutionary ambition, and the melancholy truth proclaimed in characters of fire to mankind, that the disposition to make gain by injustice does not belong to one class of society, but is the invariable characteristic in every age of all the children of Adam. In both we perceive the same fatal principles of disorganization introduced into the action of population, and the same misery induced by causes foreign to the intentions of nature in the progress of the species, and which, but for such depravity, would have been productive only of human happiness. Instead of attributing such effects, however, to the inherent laws of nature, and supposing that they are necessary and unavoidable in every age, a more careful survey of the condition of men will

lead to the conclusion that they are, for the most part, the effect of human iniquity breaking in upon the harmony of the works of nature; and that the only effectual remedy for these diseases of the social system is to be found in the precepts and practice of that Faith which offers the means of Salvation to the individual, in the purification of the human heart.

The principal errors which have prevailed on this subject have arisen from not attending to the progress of society, and the altered circumstances in which mankind are placed in the different stages of his progress. The most cursory examination, however, of the situation of the human species, under different circumstances, and in different ages of the world, must be sufficient to demonstrate that the welfare of mankind requires that different laws should regulate the progress of population at different periods of its progress.

I. If we consider the situation of man at his first appearance in the world, and for a long period after his species has begun to multiply, it is evident that an unlimited operation of the principle of increase is requisite, in order to overcome the physical difficulties with which he is surrounded. Without the strength of many of the inferior animals; without food provided by nature for his support; endowed with a constitution which requires artificial covering, and placed naked in the world without any protection from the weather; compelled to maintain an incessant, and often doubtful struggle with beasts of prey, and destitute of any weapons to counterbalance their advantages, he is compelled to contend from the infancy of his being with want, hardship, and suffering. Accustom-

ed as we are to the powers which ages of civilisation have conferred upon mankind, and to the complete subjugation of the lower animals, which has resulted from the extension of his numbers, we can hardly imagine the difficulties with which our forefathers had to contend, when society was in its infancy, and when the human race seemed placed in the midst of boundless forests or morasses, only to become the prey of the innumerable savage animals by whom they were peopled. It is the researches of modern travellers alone which carry us back as it were to the first ages of the world; which have explored those regions where man seems lost in the immensity of nature; where the power and numbers of the animal tribes bear a fearful proportion to his feeble frame, unprotected limbs, and unarmed hands; where the incessant roar of beasts of prey resounds, save at the hour of sleep, through forests of measureless extent and impassable thickness; where every element teems with enemies of superior strength, perfect equipment, and inveterate hostility; and where his race, so far from advancing, seems to be hardly able to maintain its ground against the difficulties and animosities to which it is exposed.*

If, in such circumstances, the multiplication of the species had not been provided for by a blind impulse, unrestrained by reason, and undeterred by danger, the human race would have become extinct before it even spread over the earth. Where the rearing of children is attended with such difficulty, as it necessarily is among savage tribes, marriages can only be contracted,

* Humboldt, Voyage dans l'Amerique Meridionale, vi. vii. and viii.; Mackenzie's Travels in North America, 347—389.

with any prospect of maintaining a family, in the earliest period of life. The utmost vigour and hardihood in the father is indispensable to obtain the subsistence requisite for his offspring. If his marriage is delayed till the weakness of age is added to the burden of an offspring, they must inevitably perish. The means of storing up subsistence in a permanent form, and of rendering the labour of one period of life productive of a fund for the support of another, are acquired only in subsequent times. In the early ages of mankind they were unknown—no means then existed for providing in the toil of youth for the weakness of age, or rendering the activity of early years the source of a provision for the decline of life. To meet the wants of the moment; to provide for the subsistence of the day, constitutes then the whole object, and, so far as the cares of a family are concerned, the whole duty of life; and the rude inhabitant of the forest or the mountain looks for the support of age to the youthful progeny whom he has reared around him; whose infant steps have followed him in the chace, or emulated him in the field; and whose dreams of happiness consist only in pursuing like him the beasts of the forest through their pathless recesses, or braving the fury of the tempest, in the fragile canoe which has opened to him the treasures of the deep.

If the precarious and difficult situation of man in the savage or pastoral state is considered,—exposed to perpetual hardship from the inclemency of the seasons; doomed to constant toil for the acquisition of subsistence; subject to many of the diseases and calamities incident to our condition, and ignorant of all the means which experience or science has discovered for their

alleviation; unacquainted with the mechanical arts, and but imperfectly skilled even in the simplest methods of cultivation, it seems surprising how his numbers could ever have increased, or the tender plant have taken root amidst the rude shocks to which it was exposed. It is observed by Dr Robertson, that the American Indians seldom succeed in rearing more than two children to maturity;* a striking proof of the destruction to which the human race is subjected in its earliest stages. Nothing has enabled it to overcome these obstacles, and emerge into an easier and more prosperous state, but the incessant operation of the principle of population, unrestrained by views of prudence, unfettered by the operation of reason. It is this which has provided a constant addition to the numbers of the species more than sufficient to repair its losses; which, under circumstances where reason would perhaps have despaired of the fortunes of mankind, has constantly led to its multiplication; and through all the difficulties of infant existence has borne aloft in every age the Standard of the human race.

In every period of society, and in every quarter of the world, accordingly, it has been found, that man in the savage state is indolent and improvident in the extreme. The eloquent portraits of the American tribes drawn by Dr Robertson, in his History of America, and by Tacitus, in his inimitable account of the ancient Germans, may serve for pictures of savage man in every age and quarter of the globe. A seemingly invincible repugnance to labour chains him to the occupations of hunting or fishing; the tumult of war, the animation

* Robertson's America, ii. 149.

of the chase, can alone rouse his indolent frame into activity; and till the pressure of necessity rouses the slumbering savage to strenuous exertion, he seems insensible to every thing but the enjoyments of repose. These habits are so strong, that they are generally found to be indelible. All the efforts of the missionaries, and all the effects of bordering civilisation, have been unable to reclaim the North American Indians from the attractions of this roaming species of life. The march of cultivation has contracted their territory; the vices of civilisation have thinned their numbers; and the period may already be foreseen, and is probably not far distant, when the red man shall be extinct, and the spread of the European race shall have extinguished, in a whole quarter of the globe, the primeval inhabitants of the earth.

In such periods of society it has universally been found that marriages are entered into at a very early period of life. Population advances extremely slowly, and is unable often even to maintain its own numbers; but this arises not from any restraint upon the principle of increase, but the experienced difficulty of rearing a family. Improvidence in regard to the future is almost universal; present gratification, the wants or necessities of the moment, constitute the sole principles of action. These peculiarities are everywhere characteristic of savage life; and nothing can be clearer, than if they were not so, the human race would, in such circumstances, immediately perish. When we reproach the inhabitants of savage or imperfectly civilized life with their habits, we forget both the circumstances in which they are placed, and the necessity to which they are subjected, in order to provide for the increase of the spe-

cies in the infant ages of society. We are astonished at their listlessness and insurmountable aversion to labour of any sort, forgetting, that when the arts are unknown and artificial wants unfelt, industry can meet with no reward, and indolence be subjected to no acquired privations; and that after their animal wants are satisfied, any ulterior exertion would be to them toil without motive, effort without reward. We lament their want of foresight, and contrast their conduct with what our own would be under similar circumstances, and never recollect, that it is that very improvidence which compels exertion, which never otherwise would have been made; continues the multiplication of the species under circumstances where reason might have prevented its increase; and, by exposing men to the pressure of necessity, gives birth to their invention, and forces on their improvement. We reproach them for marrying so early in life, and feel little pity for the difficulty of maintaining an offspring in which they are, in consequence, involved, —forgetting that it is then alone that the father possesses the physical means of maintaining a family; that nothing but parental love or stern necessity can rouse uncivilized man to continued exertion; that without such a habit the species could never have emerged from the woods; and that we owe our existence, and the wealth which has given us our foresight and civilisation, to the prevalence of improvident instinct among our forefathers.

Nor is it to be supposed that the immediate happiness and enjoyment of these early tribes are inferior to those of subsequent times, or that the pioneers of the human race are doomed to a life of suffering, in order that prosperity and greatness may accrue to their suc-

cessors. Such is the constitution of the human mind, and so marvellously is it adapted to the changing circumstances in which the race is placed, that there is no situation in which it is not qualified to reap felicity; and all the evils to which, at one period, it is subjected, are compensated by sources of enjoyment which are then, in a peculiar manner, placed within its reach. The ease, the independence, the casual excitements of savage life compensate at once its hardships and its privations. From the extreme difficulty which is everywhere experienced in the attempt to reclaim hunter tribes from their desultory habits, we may discern the amount of happiness which is there, in the discharge of his duty, measured out to man. The instinctive passion for these pristine sources of excitement never leaves the species in any period of its progress: it is felt alike in the last as in the first ages of society: wealth, rank, and luxury can supply nothing which can counterbalance their attractions; and the real happiness of a British nobleman in the last stage of refinement, is often derived from occupations which are common to him with the rudest. "He is found in every age," says Mr Ferguson, "like his associates, the dog and the horse, to follow the exercises of his nature in preference to what are called its enjoyments: to pine in the lap of ease and of affluence, and to exult in the midst of alarms which seem to threaten his being,—in all of which his disposition for action only keeps pace with the variety of powers with which he is endowed; and the most respectable attributes of his nature, patience, magnanimity, fortitude, and wisdom, bear a manifest reference to the difficulties with which he is destined to struggle. And

if there be a refinement in affirming that his happiness is not to be measured by the opposite set of enjoyments, it is a refinement which was felt by Regulus and Cincinnatus before the date of philosophy; it is a refinement which every schoolboy knows at play, and every savage confirms when he looks from his forest, on the pacific city, and scorns the plantation whose master he cares not to imitate."*

II. The condition of mankind in the pastoral state is much more favourable to the multiplication of his numbers; but the unrestrained operation of the principle of increase is not less essential to the progress of society in that state than in savage life. The free and independant life of the herdsman who follows his cattle over boundless plains has such attractions to mankind in every quarter of the globe, that, if the pressure of want were not felt, it never would be relinquished for the severe and incessant toil of the husbandman. Such is the physical enjoyment with which this species of existence is attended that it makes itself known to men even in the most artificial and adorned stages of society. Every sportsman has felt the glow of delight with which his frame is penetrated when emerging from the cares or the luxuries of the cities of the plain, he first breathes the fresh air, and gazes on the unbroken expanse of mountain solitudes; and every European traveller has told us that the animation and excitement of travelling on horseback through the pastoral wilds, whether of the old† or the new world,‡ is such that it overpowers every other feeling, and ren-

* Civil Society, p. 75.
† Pallas, iv. 384, Bell, ii. 276–8.
‡ Head's Pampas, 147.

ders a period of continued toil, the most brilliant spot in the recollection even of civilized man.

Experience has everywhere proved, that the difficulty of prevailing on wandering nations to settle in one place and betake themselves to the cultivation of the soil is extreme.* The Tartar and Arab tribes still roam over the plains and the deserts which were traversed by their ancestors three thousand years ago. Their mode of life, their knowledge, their manners, have undergone no alteration during that long period. The opposition experienced by the Christian missions in their endeavours to reclaim the Indian tribes who wander over the steppes of Buenos Ayres, may convince us, that, although the pastoral state is eminently favourable to the increase of the human species, it never would be abandoned, but from the pressure of necessity, for a more laborious or sedentary employment. The Persian monarchs, from the earliest ages, have constantly laboured to reclaim the Nomad nations on their frontiers from their wandering mode of life; and it formed a leading object to which the efforts of Alexander the Great were assiduously directed;† but very little success has attended their exertions, and the east is still, in every direction, filled with pastoral tribes, who, so far from remaining in their original seats, have issued forth and spread wherever the decay of cultivation afforded them the means of feeding their flocks or herds. Russia now strives with enlightened industry and colossal power to effect this great transformation; but it is still almost as far as

* It has formed the grand object in every age of oriental policy, but which has, to this day, been most imperfectly carried into execution.

† Gillies's Greece, v. 280.

ever from its accomplishment; the husbandmen whom she allures to the Steppes insensibly fall off from their previous habits; physical circumstances assert their wonted ascendency over human inclination; and the wilds in most places remain, and will probably ever remain, superior to all the efforts of man for their cultivation.

Unless, therefore, the principle of increase had been unlimited in its operation in pastoral ages, the nations which had been thrown into that line of life never could have emerged from that primitive state. It is the feeling of want which impels them into other regions, and leads to the formation of different habits. But for the rapid multiplication of the Scythian tribes they would have wandered to this day unknown and unchanged in the Steppes of the Ukraine or the plains of Tartary, and the nations of Europe who have sprung from their descendants would never have existed. It was the pressure of numbers alone which compelled them to leave these desert regions, and impelled them alternately upon the Roman, the Indian, or the Chinese empires. The great work of peopling the globe was accomplished by the swarms who were successively cast off from the Scythian tribes. The Cymbri, who first spread from Central Asia over Turkey, Germany, and the west of Europe:* the Celts, who subsequently migrated in the same direction, and laid the foundation of the French, the British, and the Spanish people:† the Goths, who afterwards poured into the decaying provinces of the Roman Empire, and rolled over the south of Europe the wave which rose on the borders of China: the Moguls, who have so of-

* Turner's Anglo-Saxons, i. chap. i.

† Chalmers's Caledonia, i. 24, 72.

ten overwhelmed the Indian provinces, or spread a new race over the plains of Asia; were all propelled by the want which the multiplication of the numbers of mankind had occasioned in their native wilds. It was this pressure which forced the human race to expand itself, even in the rudest ages of society; which scattered far and wide the seeds of future nations, from the suffering which they felt in their native seats even in the infancy of the species; and made the forced migration of shepherd tribes the means of peopling an uninhabited world.

The passions which men in this state of society feel for the wandering habits which their forefathers led before them, as well as their physical situation, is such, that it will probably for ever chain a large portion of the human race to the Nomad state. As the pastoral nations were destined to act as one of the mightiest agents in conducting the intentions of nature in every age, so there is a provision for their continued existence in the physical circumstances of a large portion of the globe. Great part of the high table-land of Asia, which shelves upwards from the Northern Ocean to the Himalaya snows, at the foot of which it is fourteen thousand feet above the sea, is utterly incapable of arable cultivation:* districts in Tartary and Mongolia, twice as large as all Europe, are for ever chained to the Nomad state. The changes of civilisation; the vices equally with the virtues of enlightened man roll unheeded round these secluded wilds: but in them the species is continually multiplying, and in their solitudes are found at one period the progenitors, at another the avengers of the human race.

* Malte Brun, ii. 363, 365.

The character and habits of mankind were necessarily altered by the different circumstances in which these wandering tribes found themselves placed in consequence of their expulsion from their native plains. When the shepherds of Scythia were surrounded by the forests of Germany, enclosed in the valleys of the Alps, or spread over the woody heights of Italy, their occupation and mode of life of necessity underwent a change. The impossibility of finding pasture for their cattle compelled them to seek the means of subsistence in the cultivation of the earth: the vicinity of the ocean suggested new modes of earning a livelihood: the luxuriance of the native fruits of the soil under a genial sun offered an easier means of existence than any to which they had previously been habituated. Thus the rapid increase of mankind in the pastoral state had the effect not only of spreading their number over the world, but of changing their occupation, giving a new direction to their desires, and consequently modifying their character. An alteration of the physical circumstances with which they were surrounded; the sight of new objects, the taste of new fruits, the feeling of a different climate, the opening of other means of subsistence or enjoyment, produced its usual effect upon the human race, and gave that varied character to mankind which was suited to the diversified mental and physical qualities with which they were endowed, and necessary to enable them to fulfil their manifold destinies. From the Celtic or Gothic tribes, whom want expelled from the plains of Tartary, have successively sprung the greatest achievements which have ever distinguished the

race of man,—the arts of Greece, the arms of Rome, the chivalry of France, and the navy of England.

If, therefore, the unlimited operation of the principle of increase is necessary in the savage state to the existence of man, it is no less essential in the pastoral to his extension and improvement.

It is worthy of observation in this view, how singularly the *physical* qualities of the earth, in the immediate vicinity of the regions where man was first created, were adapted for his infant necessities, and the means of the early and rapid increase of his race, both in the tents of the herdsman, and the fields of the plain. To the north of the sunny slopes of Armenia, where profane not less than sacred history assign the first appearance of the destined lords of the earth, extend the boundless grassy wilds of Tartary and Scythia, where not a tree was to be seen, nor a range of impassable mountains intervened, from the banks of the Danube to the frontiers of China; and where mankind, multiplying with the herbage which grew beneath their feet, and the herds which increased around them, found every possible facility for the rapid extension of their numbers in the shepherd state. At the foot of the same mountains, to the south, lay extended the noble plain of Mesopotamia, with a natural irrigation unparalleled in the world, furnishing the means of ample subsistence under the prolific sun of Asia; and teeming with a luxuriance of natural riches which in every age has excited the astonishment of mankind, and which all the labour of subsequent ages has been unable to exhaust. Had either been awanting the species must have perished in its cradle; had the plain of Shinar not offered to his hand unbounded natural riches, the cities of the plain could never have

arisen; had the wilds of Tartary been as sterile as the rocks of Arabia, or as thickly wooded as the American forests, the shepherds of the hills could never have formed the fathers of mankind. But the boundless riches of the Babylonian fields gave birth even in the first ages to those stupendous cities, from whence the enterprise of commerce dispersed the human race in every direction through Central Asia; while the uniform pasturage of the Scythian wilds spread before them a vast highway stored with food, by means of which they could penetrate with ease to the remotest extremities of the old world; and where those countless swarms of men have sprung from the unlaboured bounty of nature, who in every age have exercised so great an influence on the fortunes of mankind.

III. The same want of a rapid increase in the human species is felt in the early agricultural state. If we consider the precarious situation of the human race when they first begin to cultivate the earth: scattered over a vast expanse, without the means either of uniting their numbers, or augmenting their strength: surrounded by boundless forests, impassable morasses, or inaccessible mountains: destitute of iron implements to enhance their powers, or of domestic animals to share their labours,—it is evident that it is in the rapid increase of their *numbers* only that the means of overcoming these numerous difficulties can be found. The want of *men*, accordingly, is the want which is most severely felt in all infant or early agricultural states. It is by the application of a vast amount of human strength that all the prodigies which still excite our wonder in early civilisation have been formed. From the period when criminals and outcasts

were invited by Romulus to augment the resources of infant Rome,* to the time when a similar policy has been adopted by the North American States, the Republics of Columbia and Buenos Ayres, and has proved the foundation of the rising strength of the Australian Colonies, the same want has been felt in all infant states of men, to undertake the innumerable works which are necessary to overcome the obstacles of nature. Hence the high wages which labourers uniformly receive in rising colonies; and hence the extreme apprehension which, despite the manifold evils of a penal settlement, is felt in New South Wales, of any diminution in the crime or the transportation of England.† If this want is so strongly felt even in colonies fostered by the mother country, annually recruited by emigrants or convicts, and enjoying all the advantages of civilisation, capital, and knowledge, how much more strongly must it have been experienced in the earlier ages, when capital is unknown, art in its infancy, and industry in its rudest form.

The slow progress, accordingly, which states, excepting those most favoured by nature, make in enlarging their numbers in the first stages of society, may convince us how necessary an unlimited operation of the principle of increase is to the multiplication of mankind in these periods. The inhabitants of Britain in the time of Cæsar probably amounted to 700,000;‡ during the Heptarchy its population was still smaller;§ and in the time of Henry V. the whole island did not contain above 2,500,000 souls.¶ Thus, in *fifteen cen-*

* Livy, l. i. c. 4.

† See Resolutions at Sidney, May 1839,—Colonial Magazine, No. v. Art. i.

‡ Henry's Britain, i. 291. § Ibid. iii. 319.

¶ Ibid. x. 281.

turies, the numbers of the people were hardly tripled. So late as the time of Elizabeth the population of England amounted only to about 3,000,000, and in 1700 to no more than 5,134,000* souls; and in the first of these periods that of Scotland did not exceed 700,000. Notwithstanding the vast fertility of Ireland, of which the numbers whom it now maintains is the best proof, it did not contain in the reign of James I. more than two millions of souls, and in 1784, its population was only 3,400,000. Sweden still suffers from the want of a rural population; and, notwithstanding the immense extent and almost uniform fertility of Russia, its inhabitants till within the last century were extremely scanty; and provinces much larger than France and Great Britain put together still remain, even in its European dominions, entirely destitute of inhabitants.† These facts are sufficient to demonstrate the extreme difficulty with which, in the infancy of society, the number of mankind are increased, even in countries where the obstacles of nature are the least formidable; and point out the necessity which exists for an unlimited operation of the principle of increase, to secure the extension of the human race under such circumstances. It is in those more favoured situations only, where the riches of the soil, or the extraordinary advantages of climate, or natural irrigation, almost supersede the exertions of human industry; in the Delta of Egypt, where the floods of the Nile annually submerge the land with a fertilizing deluge; in the plain of Mesopotamia, where

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 13, 14, and Hume, App. III. Vol. iv.

† Bremner's Russia, ii. 32. In the three provinces of Vologda, Archangel, and Olonetz, there are 216,000,000 acres of pine and fir. —Ibid.

two alternate shelving declivities from the Tigris to the Euphrates, and the Euphrates to the Tigris, afford the means of nourishing vegetation in perhaps the hottest part of the globe, with a perennial and inexhaustible supply of water;* or in the fields of Bengal, where the Ganges, descending from the eternal Himalaya snows, overspreads the fields yearly with a rich layer of alluvial deposit, from whence the food of man springs unbidden to his hand; that population advances from the first with great rapidity, and the earth, even in the most remote ages, is found to have been constantly covered with a vast multitude of inhabitants.

The rapid progress of population in the North American colonies has led to many erroneous ideas in regard to the probable rate of increase in the earlier ages of the world. The people of that country have commenced the cultivation of their forests, with all the advantages and resources of civilized life at their command; with the use of domestic animals, of iron implements, and skilled cultivation; with the industrious habits and the impulse of extensive capital; with the inestimable blessings of general knowledge, equal laws, and pure religion; with the unbounded energy of democratic vigour, and the ardent spirit of individual enterprise. How different in all these particulars was the condition of man when he commenced the cultivation of the earth in the earlier ages of the world: when he had to contend with the inferior animals, instead of employing them as the instruments of his will; when the power of metallic instruments, and the advantages of improved culture

* Gillies's Greece, v. 89.

were alike unknown; when no capital was to be found to commence any considerable undertakings; when the advantages of industry, and the habit of submitting to its toils, were neither felt nor required; when no knowledge existed to guide the labours of the husbandman, no internal communication to facilitate the disposal of his produce, no institutions to shield him from the oppression of his superiors, or the violence of his enemies! The state of the North American population is not to be taken as an example, but as a contrast to the condition of man in the ruder ages of the world.

The fact, that the progress of population in that country is *altogether unexampled*, and that the nearest approximations to it are to be found, not in rude or barbarous times, but in states which, like Russia, combine the habits and advantages of civilized life with the capabilities of an extensive territory;* or Australia, whose active and energetic emigrants, having all the powers of European art and capital at their command, all the benefits of a boundless market for the produce of their industry at their disposal, and the powers of a vast amount of forced convict or free emigrant labour for their support; demonstrates how erroneous it is to imagine that the human race, in the earlier stages of its progress, is capable of advancing with any thing like the rapidity with which it multiplies in later times, under these peculiar circumstances.

If to these obstacles with which the human species

* Russia doubles its population in forty-nine years.—Tooke's Russia, i. 242. Australia hitherto once in five years.—Martin's Colonial History, Vol. iv. p. 306. Its population in 1788 was 1030: in 1833, from the effects of emigration, 71,000.—Martin, Ibid.

has at first to contend, arising from the *physical* difficulties with which it is surrounded, be added the still more formidable evils arising from the crimes and violence to which itself is inclined; the incredible ravages of barbarous warfare, the massacring of armies, the bondage of cities, the devastation of provinces,* or the more slow but still more terrible effect of domestic oppression, the feuds of clans, the exactions of powers, the ravages of banditti, or the plunder of armies, it is evident that, without an unlimited operation of the principle of population, mankind, in many situations at least, would be utterly destroyed before their numbers had acquired sufficient strength to resist so many causes of destruction. If reason operated upon the inhabitants of these unhappy states with the same force as it does upon man in his enlightened and civilized state: if the marriage union was delayed till provision was made for a family, or till the indulgencies of acquired wants could be secured, the human race would speedily be exterminated. Happily for the fortunes of mankind, the *instincts* of his nature in these melancholy circumstances are predominant over his reason: the same oppression which has thinned his numbers, extinguishes every principle which could limit the operation of the principle of population; and through all the miseries of present existence the race is perpetuated, and means are afforded for the restoration of his numbers in happier times.

IV. It would not have been sufficient, however, if

* Gengiskhan boasted at his death that he had slain 13,000,000 of men; and Timour might probably, with equal reason, assert that, between his own troops and his enemies, he had made as great a chasm in the inhabitants of the globe.

Providence had provided, in the wandering propensities of shepherd tribes, for the early dispersion of barbarous races, and in the unlimited operation of the principle of increase, for the means of repairing all the losses to which their numbers were exposed, if some means had not at the same time been established for spreading *civilized nations* through the earth; for implanting the seeds of infant improvement in the wilderness of nature, and counteracting that strong tendency to remain in one spot, and cultivate the lands only which their fathers had improved before them, which is the immediate and unvarying consequence of the commencement of the labours of agriculture. Such a provision is made accordingly in two of the most powerful agents which, in the whole course of human progress, act upon the fortunes of society; and of the force of both of which the present age is, in an especial manner, the witness: the spirit of *commerce*, and the ambition of *democracy*.

When the wealth which has accrued to society from the surplus produce of those engaged in agriculture has become considerable, the natural tendency of the human mind to long after luxuries and increase enjoyment by the productions of distant states, leads to the growth and extension of COMMERCE. The means of amassing wealth which this profession is speedily found to bestow, attracts multitudes to its occupations, and leads to the utmost privations and dangers, being cheerfully undergone in the insatiable thirst for gold.

If it be true, as it undoubtedly is, that the love of money is the root of all evil, it is also the source of much good; and among its beneficial influences none is more deserving of notice than its effect, from the very first ages of society, in extending and dispersing the

civilized races of mankind. In vain is the inhabitant of wealthy regions chained by habit, friendships, and artificial enjoyments to the place of his birth; the wealth of commerce proves an irresistible magnet, which draws him into distant regions; and in the very number of his artificial wants, and the variety of his acquired enjoyments, are to be found additional motives, which prompt him to penetrate distant regions in quest of the wealth by which alone these enjoyments can be purchased. From the very earliest ages, accordingly, commerce has been the great propelling force which has driven civilized man into distant regions; and given rise to those stations for the transit of merchandise, or the mutual convenience of buyers and sellers, which have afterwards grown into the greatest cities. Babylon and Nineveh themselves were in their later stages mainly nourished by the vast inland commerce of which they formed the heart; and civilisation in more distant quarters arose almost invariably around the most important stations which convenience or necessity had assigned for the caravans. The researches of modern learning, equally in Germany* and in England,† have now clearly demonstrated, that almost all the great and all the oldest cities of antiquity arose around the stations of commerce; and that Meroe in Abyssinia, Thebes and Memphis in Egypt, Tyre in Syria, and Carthage in Africa, equally with Palmyra and Balbec in later times, owed their origin to the great influx of foreigners, produced by these cities being the most convenient stations for a vast inland or maritime commerce.

But the habits of commerce and the desire of gain

* Heeren's Ancient Nations, ii. 365, 374.

† Gillies's Greece, v. 100, 103.

only render man a transient sojourner in distant regions. When his wealth is made, when his object is gained, he returns to the land of his birth, and all the labours of his manhood are sustained by the hope that he may ultimately settle in the place of nativity, and leave his bones in the tomb of his fathers. It is a different principle, but one arising from the same causes, which prompts him to leave his hereditary seats, and seek in distant lands that home which he no longer cares to possess in his father's land. The spirit which leads to this is that of *urban democracy;* and as the difficulties to be encountered, and the habits to be overcome in such permanent expulsion of mankind from the regions of civilisation, into the solitudes of nature, constitute some of the most powerful affections of the human heart, so the principle which is destined, when occasion requires it, to overcome them, is beyond all others searching and powerful in its operation. The spirit of democracy, in other words, the desire of exercising the government of the State, arises so naturally to man when congregated in great cities, and engaged in the transactions of distant commerce, that it may be considered almost of inevitable occurrence. It is this principle which, in every age, has prompted civilized men to forego all the pleasures of home and kindred; to sever all the bonds of filial or patriotic love, and seek in distant regions those means of elevation which the contracted sphere of their native seats will not afford. The love of power, the desire of distinction, the passion for wealth; envy of superiors—jealousy of equals—contempt for inferiors, combine in these circumstances to raise such a tempest in the human breast as roots mankind up from his ancient seats—obliterates his

oldest recollections, extinguishes his strongest attachments, and sends forth the burning enthusiast, ardent for the equality of rights, and the regeneration of society, into distant lands, where his hopes are too often blasted by the stern necessities of his new situation; but he nevertheless implants his seed in the soil, and leaves behind him in the wilderness the foundations of an extended and prosperous society.

As the combined spirit of commerce and democracy is thus the great moving power which leads civilized man to settle in distant regions, and which has given birth in every age to the marvellous effects of colonization, so a provision was made for the early extension of the species in this way, in the peculiar conformation of the Mediterranean sea. As clearly as the Scythian wilds were spread out to facilitate the migration of the pastoral nations, were the waters of the Mediterranean let in through the pillars of Hercules, to afford the means for the early expansion of the civilized world by mercantile settlement. The camel, the ship of the desert, indeed gave to the inland Asiatic merchant the means of traversing the most sterile regions, and rendered even the horrors of the Sahara desert pervious to the civilized thirst for gold. But it was the waters of the Mediterranean and the Euxine, penetrating so far into the centre of the continents of the ancient world, and communicating by the Red Sea even with the most distant parts of India, which gave the means of diffusing by colonization the civilized portion of mankind over the old world.

The Phœnicians, the inventors of letters, which alone gave permanence to the creations of thought; the Carthaginians, who first circumnavigated the

continent of Africa; the Athenians, who spread the light of science and the refinements of genius throughout the world; successively studded the shores of the Mediterranean with their colonies, and wherever its blue expanse of waters extended, were to be seen the white sail and the smiling harbour, which bespoke not only the passage, but the residence and the settlement of civilized man. Two thousand five hundred miles of coast were sprinkled in a succession of ages with these mercantile establishments; * two hundred and fifty maritime cities arose, all constituted with democratic institutions, whose governments fell under the observation of Aristotle in his immortal work on Politics. † Rome herself, the mistress of the world, attained to greatness by the successive subjugation of these magnificent mercantile republics; it was their industry which filled her coffers with wealth; it was their inhabitants which increased her legions with numbers; it was their acquirements which rendered her arms invincible. With truth did Dr Johnson say, that all that has hitherto dignified or sweetened human existence, our arts, our letters, our arms, our religion, have come from the shores of the Mediterranean; for it was there that the expansive force of civilized man first received its full developement. Those who feel most strongly the vast importance of this powerful spring in human affairs, when subjected to due regulation, will ever entertain the strongest repugnance to those selfish and wicked attempts which would convert the regulated steam pressure of human improvement into the desolating explosion which lays all around it in ruins.

* Gillies's Greece, v. 266.

† Arist. de Pol. l. i. c. ii.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE FUNDAMENTAL RELATION BETWEEN POPULATION AND AGRICULTURAL SUBSISTENCE.

ARGUMENT.

The Labour of one Man is capable of raising more than is sufficient for his own support—And this holds with any number of men employed in cultivation —And in every stage of society—Argument of Mr Malthus on this subject disproved by the recent progress of population in the British Islands, and their obvious capability of yielding a vast and rapid increase of Subsistence—Same inference results from the present state and capabilities of France—Superiority of the power of Production to Population—Can alone explain the origin of the Arts and of Commerce—And the increasing powers of Agriculture in the later stages of society—And the increase of Capital in these later stages—Vast additional numbers the world is capable of maintaining—Argument from the examples of China, Hindostan, and Japan cited by Mr Malthus—Barrier which the increase of Luxury opposes to the increase of the human race to their extreme limits in any country—Reasons why the progress of the human race is so slow, and so much within the powers of its increase and maintenance—Causes of the errors which have prevailed on this subject.

THREE different relations might have been established by Nature between the produce of human labour and the wants of the human species for the essential article of subsistence. The labour of one man's hands might have produced less than what was adequate to his own maintenance, or it might have been equal to it; or it might have produced more. On this fundamental relation, the future destiny of the species must have been almost entirely dependant.

If the labour of one man's hands had been capable of producing less than was requisite for his own sup-

port, mankind could never have emerged from the woods. The addition made by the exertions of every individual to the general sum of subsistence being less than was required for his own sustenance during the time of their continuance, human industry could have made no sensible addition to its available amount. The species could never have advanced beyond the hunter or shepherd state; because the moment that men commenced the work of agriculture, more food would have been consumed in the time of labour than could be reaped from the harvest at its termination. Considerable numbers might have been nourished by the produce of the chase where wild animals were plentiful, and multitudes, perhaps, fed by the produce of the earth, as it was reaped by the pasturage of their flocks and herds; but the race never could have passed the barriers set by Nature to the subsistence of these animals, and must have remained for ever in the habits of savage or pastoral life.

If the labour of one man's hands had been equal to his own support, but no more, the race in like manner never could have attained either to the blessings or evils of civilisation. The individual engaged in agriculture might have fed himself by the produce of his toil, but he could not have maintained a family; and, therefore, no multiplication of agricultural inhabitants would have taken place. In fact, it would never have been attempted; or if begun, like an unproductive mine or sterile desert, would immediately have been abandoned. Man, like any of the beasts of prey which live on weaker animals of different species, would have increased or declined in numbers according as chance or the bounty of Nature had withheld

or expanded the means of subsistence; and no efforts of his own could have enabled him to provide the means for the extension of his numbers, or augment the sum of human subsistence.

The fact, therefore, of the human race having, in all quarters of the globe, and in almost all climates, excepting, perhaps, the burning torrid or the frozen arctic Zone, commenced and successfully prosecuted the art of agriculture, clearly demonstrates, that, after the labours of husbandry have commenced, the real relation between man and the subsistence which flows from his toil is, that he can *do much more* than maintain himself by these exertions. It is this excess which has in every age, and in every part of the world, produced the fund by which all other classes of society have been maintained. And unless such a fund had existed in the hands of the cultivators of the soil, these other classes could never have had any existence. Necessaries must precede conveniences or luxuries; and no men would betake themselves to the arts of life, unless the husbandman, to whom they disposed of the produce of their labour, had, in the interim, been able to furnish them with the means of subsistence. The existence, therefore, of arts, commerce, and separate professions, apart from the cultivation of the soil, in all ages and parts of the world except the rudest, affords decisive evidence, that in all times and places the produce of the soil derived from human labour has afforded a vast surplus fund over and above the food required by the cultivators in its production.

This being the fundamental relation between population and subsistence, as proved by the universal experience of mankind, it is immaterial, provided al-

ways that the soil, accessible to the cultivators, will admit of an increase of subsistence, what *number* of persons are engaged in the labours of agriculture, and what are maintained by their surplus produce in the other arts of life. If the labour of ten men is capable of raising subsistence for twenty, one hundred must be equally able to do so for two hundred, or one hundred millions for two hundred millions. The proportion of the other classes of society who can be maintained by the surplus produce of the agriculturists, must determine, of course, in every country, the number to which those other classes can by possibility increase. But as long as the fertility of the soil is unexhausted, and the utmost limits of increasing subsistence have not been attained, the same proportion must exist between the number of the cultivators, and the surplus produce they can raise, as in the earliest times, unless its productive powers decrease with the lapse of time, for this plain reason, that the number of mouths have increased in exactly the same proportion as the number of hands.

As little does it make any difference, supposing always that the earth, accessible to the cultivators, will admit of an increase of subsistence, with what degree of *rapidity* population may advance. This proposition, though not so obvious as the preceding, is equally capable of demonstration, and equally established by the universal experience of mankind. It results obviously, from the extremely slow pace at which population can, even in the most favourable circumstances, increase, compared to the much more rapid rate at which the produce of the soil can be multiplied by human labour. If a couple marry and establish them-

selves on a piece of uncultivated ground, some years must elapse before any considerable addition to the family meals is required by their children; and probably twenty winters must have passed over, before these children have arrived at man's or woman's estate, or the multiplication of the species can have commenced with a new generation. But not merely in this interval, but far within it, the labour of the parents is capable of making such an addition to the agricultural produce of their little domain, as will render the subsistence for their increasing progeny not only ample, but abundant. Decisive proof of this exists equally in savage as in civilized life. Every traveller in the genial regions of the south has borne witness to the fact, that an Indian or negro, by merely scratching the earth for a few weeks in autumn with the branch of a tree or the rudest implement of husbandry, can raise subsistence enough, without any additional trouble, to maintain his family for a whole year; and Great Britain at least has already had ample cause to feel the truth of this observation, because it is well known, that it is to the ability of men just emerged from slavery to gain their subsistence on such easy terms, that the well known and ruinous disinclination of the emancipated slaves of the West Indies to work regularly for wages is to be ascribed. They all know, that, by settling in the woods and clearing an acre or two, they can maintain themselves with ease by three weeks or a month's work in the year.

The experience of civilized life even in the most unpropitious circumstances is equally decisive of the same fact. If a settler in Canada or in the back woods of America gets possession of three or four acres, and once succeeds in giving it even the most

imperfect clearing, his fortune and that of his descendants is made, provided they have tolerable habits of industry. Long before the back woodsman's children have arrived at man's estate, they find themselves surrounded with rustic plenty, all flowing from their father's labours; and the experience of all later observers has confirmed the truth of Adam Smith's observation, that the real want experienced in such circumstances is that of additional hands, not of additional ground to feed them, and that a widow with a numerous young family is universally sought after as an heiress.* To the same purpose Humboldt informs us that, in South America, such is the fertility of the soil, that the smallest spots will maintain a large family;† while General Miller‡ has borne testimony to the fact, that the rate of increase of wheat sown in Columbia is generally seventy fold, even although the ground is only scratched with a branch, and not even thoroughly cleared of the bushes and trees that happen to be upon it.§

The British Colonies in America afford decisive proof on a great scale, and for a considerable period, that the immense excess of the powers of production over the wants of the population, continues unabated in new countries for a long time, and suffers no diminution even from the most rapid and unexampled increase of population. We are informed by M. Tocqueville, that the

* Hall's America, i. 282, 291, and 384.

† Humboldt, Nouvelle Espagne, iii. 29—36.

‡ Miller's War in South America, i. 336.

§ "Nothing," says Humboldt, "strikes a European traveller more than the small patches which in Mexico support a large family. The Banana tree will furnish food for fifty individuals on the same surface which under wheat will only maintain two."—Humboldt, Nouvelle Espagne, iii. 29—36.

population of the basin of the Mississippi, the richest part of America, has increased thirty fold in the last forty years;* while during the same period the total population of the United States has tripled. This increase in the western provinces of America is probably the most rapid that ever was known on the face of the globe. It far outstrips the utmost possible multiplications of human beings from their own powers of increase, and is mainly owing to the prodigious horde of immigrants from the European states and the older settled maritime provinces of America. Nevertheless, not only is there no deficiency of subsistence felt to provide for this enormous increase of human beings, advancing not as the square, but as the cube of time; but the accumulation of subsistence from the labours of the cultivators has been so great, that out of their immense surplus produce, vast cities and innumerable villages have arisen, and Cincinnati, Louisville, and other towns on the Ohio and Mississippi have, during the same period, multiplied above a hundred fold, and, in fact, risen from obscure hamlets into splendid capitals.

The experience of the United States as a whole is equally decisive as to the inexhaustible bounty of nature admitting of this increase going for a very long period, and over an immense extent of surface. Tocqueville observes, that the increase of population ever since the British settlers landed there in considerable numbers in 1640, down to the present time, has been that of constantly doubling in every twenty-three years and a half. This long-continued and astonishing multiplication for two centuries is the most luminous fact

* Tocqueville, ii. 376.

which the history of the globe has yet exhibited of the fixed superiority which the produce of human labour is able to maintain even over the most rapidly increasing multiplication of the species. Not only has no want of physical necessaries been experienced in America during that period, but the produce of the soil has diffused a degree of ease and well-being through the whole cultivators, unparalleled in the past history of the world; and from the surplus produce of their labour after thus supporting the persons engaged in agriculture in ease and affluence, vast cities have been raised, an immense commerce nourished, and an amount of capital stored up which has rendered the Americans second to none in commercial enterprise, except their parent state, and rivalled all but the vast accumulations of British industry.

These facts are so important, and bear so decisively upon the present inquiry as to the natural relation between population and subsistence, that they will probably be deemed by all to be conclusive as to the power of the human race to make its food keep pace with its numbers, at least in those favourable situations where unappropriated land is to be had in abundance, and the virgin riches of nature are, for the first time, reaped by the hand of skilled and civilized men. But an opposite state of matters, it has been thought, takes place when society has assumed a more settled and artificial form; where land is generally appropriated and divided, and the numbers of the species bear a different proportion to the extent of the available ground which is within their reach. In these circumstances it has been generally held, of late years, that the scale soon turns the other way,

and that the powers of multiplication in mankind are such, as to render it altogether impossible to make subsistence keep pace with their increase. "The best possible policy and the greatest encouragement to agriculture could not, it is said, in Great Britain for example, produce a greater increase than that of subsistence raised by agriculture being doubled in twenty-five years. In the next twenty-five years, it is impossible to suppose that the produce could be quadrupled. It would be contrary to all our knowledge of the properties of land. The improvement of the barren parts would be a work of time and labour; and it must be evident to those who have the slightest acquaintance with agricultural subjects, that, in proportion as cultivation extended, the additions that could be yearly made to the former average produce must be gradually and regularly diminishing. That we may be the better able to compare the increase of population and food, let us make a supposition which, without pretending to accuracy, is clearly more favourable to the power of production in the earth, than any experience we have had of its qualities will warrant. Let us suppose that the yearly additions which might be made to the former average produce, instead of decreasing, which they certainly would do, were to remain the same; and that the produce of this island might be increased every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to what it at present produces. The most enthusiastic speculator cannot suppose a greater increase than this. In a few centuries it would make every acre of land in the island like a garden.*

And the conclusion which this able writer draws

* Malthus, i. 14, 5th edition.

from these premises is this: "The necessary effect of these two different rates of increase when brought together will be very striking. Let us call the population of this island eleven milions, (in 1798;) and suppose the present produce equal to the easy support of such a number. In the first twenty-five years, the population could be twenty-two millions, and the food being also doubled, the means of subsistence would be equal to this increase. In the next twenty-five years, the population would be forty-four millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of thirty-three millions. In the next period, the population would be eighty-eight millions, and the means of subsistence just equal to the support of half of that number. And at the conclusion of the first century, the population would be a hundred and seventy-six millions, and the means of subsistence only equal to the support of fifty-five millions, leaving a population of a hundred and twenty-one millions totally unprovided for."* And it is to this constant pressure of population upon subsistence that he ascribes the greater part of the misery that exists in human affairs; "the power of population being in every period so much superior that the increase of the human species can only been kept down to the level of the means of subsistence by the constant operation of the strong law of necessity, acting as a check upon the greater power.†"

In considering the justice of this celebrated argument it is necessary to make a distinction.

If it is meant merely that every particular country may, by human industry, be cultivated to its utmost, then it may at once be conceded that the proposition is well founded. We have only to look at a kitchen

* Malthus, i. 14—15. † Ibid. i. 12, 13, 14.

garden, producing as much subsistence as the soil can by any exertions be brought to yield, to be convinced that it is *physically* possible for any particular country, or even the whole earth, which admits of improvement, to be cultivated in the same manner, and to be incapable of yielding any addition to the food of man. Whether the *moral* constitution of human nature renders such an event either possible or probable, will be amply illustrated in a subsequent part of this work.

But, if it is meant by this argument, that, long *before* this ultimate limit has been attained, population has a tendency to increase faster than subsistence can be provided for it, then a little reflection must be sufficient to show that it is not only erroneous, but diametrically the reverse of the truth.

Let the case be taken which Mr Malthus has selected, of Great Britain, and let it be supposed that it contains at present, as it probably does, twenty millions of inhabitants, which is putting the case more strongly than even he has done. It may be conceded that in the next five-and-twenty years the population is capable of being doubled. Then could subsistence be doubled in the same time, or quadrupled in the next five-and-twenty? There does not appear that there can be the least doubt that it could; and that within the period when, according to Mr Malthus's argument, population must have outstripped subsistence, it could greatly have exceeded its demands.

The population of Great Britain, including the army and navy, in 1801, was 10,942,000 souls, and in 1831 it was 16,539,000, and it is at present (1840,) nearly 20,000,000. This is probably the greatest authentic instance of the increase of an old state on record in the world. It is almost as great

as the celebrated augmentation of the American States, if the addition of the settlers from Europe, and that of the black slaves, be deducted from the increase of the latter state; for the total free population of America was

In 1820,	-	9,637,000
1828,	-	11,348,000
		1,711,000, or $17\frac{4}{10}$ per cent.

The increase, therefore, in eight years was, of free people, 1,711,000, or $17\frac{4}{10}$ per cent. This rate would give an increase yearly of 177,000, or in ten years about 22 per cent. In thirty years it would be about 66 per cent., an increase not greater than 52 per cent. in Great Britain, if the immense annual migration of Europeans to America be taken into consideration."*

Here, then, is an instance which has practically occurred of the increase of an old and opulent state, with a circumscribed territory by no means very fertile even in the very best places, and extremely barren in others. And what has been its condition in regard to subsistence during the latter period, and especially

* Hall's America, iii. 436.

The emigration from the British Isles to the United States in 1830 was 30,574, and in 1831, 49,383, and when it is recollected that these were almost all adults, the vast addition thence annually made to the population must bring down the American almost to the British rate of increase. In 1832, and following years, the numbers who emigrated from the united kingdom alone were as follow:

To British America.	To United States.	To Cape and Australia.	Total.
1832, 66,339 -	32,980 -	3,994 -	103,313
1833, 28,808 -	29,225 -	4,651 -	62,684
1834, 40,060 -	33,074 -	1,088 -	76,222

—Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 128.

Probably 50,000 or 60,000 emigrants at the least from all parts of the world land in the United States every year. At New York they sometimes amount to 5000 in a single day.—Chevalier's America, ii. 347.

for the last five-and-twenty years, during which stringent corn laws, except in years of scarcity, have prevented the importation of foreign grain?* During that time almost the whole of its subsistence has been derived from its own soil, of only moderate fertility, and, so far has the fact been from any *deficiency* having been experienced in the means of subsistence, the greatest distress has existed, especially during the latter period of the progress, from the *redundance and low price* of agricultural produce. Farther, the consumption of food during that period has enormously increased in proportion to the number of the people: luxurious habits and costly living have descended to an unparalleled degree in the ranks of society: a vast proportion of the land of the state has been directed to the raising of butcher-meat, the feeding of horses, and the use of breweries and distilleries; and yet, so far from there having been any difficulty in feeding the people with what remained, the only distress among the cultivators has arisen from the general redundancy of their supply in the market.† Distress has existed

* The following is the annual average of importation of foreign grain of all kinds into the British Islands since the commencement of the present century, which shews how small a proportion it has borne to the national consumption, and that that proportion, such as it is, is rapidly on the decrease:

Average quarters annually imported.			
1801 to 1810, -	600,946	1821 to 1830, -	534,992
1810 to 1820, -	458,578	1830 to 1835, -	398,509

—Porter's Prog., i. 146.

† The number of horses for which duty was paid in 1821, the last year before the agricultural horse-tax was taken off, was 1,326,553. (Porter, i. 185.) The number is now at least 1,500,000; which, taking the food of each horse at that of eight men, which is the usual computation, would make the food raised for these animals annually in Great Britain, as much as would be required for twelve millions of men. The number of horned cattle, or the quantity of grain consumed in distilleries, cannot be as-

and does exist to a great degree, but it has all arisen from the difficulty of finding employment for the manufacturing, not extracting food from the agricultural population. On the contrary, the cultivators, by adding less than a *quarter* to their numbers since the beginning of the century, have been able to provide food in abundance for more than *double* the number of manufacturers who then existed. So boundless is the bounty of nature, and so rapid the means of increasing food, which she has given to the human species, that an increase of manufacturing mouths, unparalleled in any age or country since the beginning of the world, has not called into a half of its possible vigour the latent powers of an old and, in many respects, highly fettered cultivation.

Farther, it appears from the tables quoted in the Appendix, that while the rate of increase in the population in the manufacturing counties of Great Britain has been constantly and rapidly on the increase during the last thirty years that the Government census has been taken, the rate of increase in the agricultural has been as constantly and rapidly diminishing.* And while the inhabitants of our great towns have during that period been all doubled, and many of them tripled in numbers, the cultivators of the fields have been

certained with equal accuracy; but there are 27,000,000 acres of land in pasture in the united kingdom, or about three-fifths of the land hitherto brought under cultivation. (Porter, i. 182.) Taking the two together, it is a most reasonable computation to say that the land requisite to feed 20,000,000 of men is now in Great Britain devoted to the raising of food for horses or cattle; so that the productive powers of our agricultural population and their fellow-labourers in the plough, have not only in the last forty years provided food for a population which has nearly doubled in that time, but for animals consuming food to at least an equal amount, and increasing probably in a still more rapid ratio.

* See Appendix, No. I.

slumbering on with an increase of only 26 per cent. in thirty years.* Yet during nearly the whole of this time the British agriculturists maintained not only themselves, but the whole manufacturing population of the country, and the enormous multitude of horses and cattle which it contained, from the labour of their hands; and, so far from subsistence in consequence proving deficient, it, on the contrary, accumulated to such a degree, that, from 1831 to 1835, the prices of every species of agricultural produce were ruinously low, and in the last of these years wheat fell to thirty-nine shillings and fourpence the quarter, being lower than it had been for eighty years;† and although a great importation took place in consequence of the bad harvest of 1838, yet, with that exception, notwithstanding three consecutive bad seasons, in 1837, 1838, and 1839, the empire has maintained itself from its own resources during the last of these years. It is evident, therefore, that, notwithstanding its dense population, and old and long established civilization, and the unparalleled growth of its manufacturing industry, the powers of agricultural production in this island have kept in advance of its population just as effectually as they have done in the virgin soil and infant civilization on the other side of the Atlantic.

If the next step in Mr Malthus's hypothetical progress be taken, and if he ask if the population has

* Appendix, No. II.

† Price of the quarter of wheat on an average of

1832,	58s. 8d.	1835,	39s. 4d.
1833,	52s. 11d.	1836,	48s. 6d.
1834,	46s. 2d.	1837,	55s. 10d.

Average of six years, 50s. 3d. (Tooke's Prices, iii. 41.) The average price of the last half century immediately preceding 1792 was about 50s.

doubled in the last forty-two years, and subsistence has kept ahead, it is conceivable that it should double in the next twenty-five years, and subsistence keep equally in advance, the answer is not less satisfactory. No reason can be assigned, either practical or theoretical, why the same superiority of the labour of man's hands to the subsistence which he requires, which produces so great a surplus of produce in the North American Colonies, in the infancy of their career, should not obtain also in the British Islands in the maturity of her progress, until the soil of these islands is fairly cultivated to its uttermost. The same unvarying law of the superiority of the produce of labour to the wants of the labourers obtains in both cases. Nay, so boundless are the resources of nature in yielding subsistence to the labour of man, compared to the power of multiplication in the human species, that it will immediately appear that at this moment the British population is capable of doubling the whole subsistence raised in the British empire, not in five-and-twenty years, but perhaps in five, certainly in ten years. And the same rate might go on successively, if no other moral obstacles existed to the rapid multiplication of mankind, until the land in these islands was cultivated to its utmost. The powers of man over the soil do not diminish as agriculture improves and society advances; on the contrary, they are greatly increased; and the results are staggering, doubtless, just as the distances of the fixed stars, or any of the calculations of astronomy are, but they are not less fixed on authentic data, nor less productive of conviction to an intelligent mind.

If, in order to test the comparative powers of population and production, it is allowable to put the physi-

cally possible, but highly improbable, and morally impossible event of an old state like the British empire doubling in numbers every five-and-twenty years, it is of course necessary to suppose on the other side the equally physically possible, but morally improbable, event of the whole resources of the country being applied during the same period to the production of subsistence. Now, if that were done, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt, that the island could, in the space of five or ten years, be made to maintain double its present number of inhabitants. It is stated by Mr Cowling, whose accuracy on this subject is well known, and his statement is adopted by the learned and able Mr Porter, that there is in England and Wales 27,700,000 cultivated acres; in Ireland 12,125,000, and in Scotland about 5,265,000, in all 45,090,000; and of these, he calculates that there are at present in cultivation by the spade and the plough 19,237,000 acres, and 27,000,000 in pasturage.* That is just about two acres to every human being in the united kingdom; the number of inhabitants in Great Britain and Ireland in 1827, being about 23,000,000, and the same proportion probably obtains at the present time, when their numbers are nearly 30,000,000. Now a full supply of subsistence for every living person in wheat is a quarter a year; so that at this rate there is only *one* quarter raised over the whole empire, for every *two* acres of arable and meadow land. But an acre of arable land yields on an average of all England, two quarters and five bushels, or somewhat more than two quarters and a-half;† so that every two acres is ca-

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 178, 179.

† See M'Culloch's Statistics of Great Britain, i. 476. In many counties, particularly Bedfordshire, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Northum-

pable at the present average of maintaining *five* human beings; or five times the present inhabitants of the empire.* Can there be the smallest doubt that in a few years this quarter per half acre might be turned into two quarters per acre, less than the existing average of England? Nay, is there not ground to believe that, by greater exertion, every acre might be made to produce three quarters, still less than the average of many of its counties? The first of these changes would at once yield food for four times, the last for six times the present inhabitants of the British Isles, independent altogether of the waste lands, &c. of which Mr Cowling states there are 6,000,000 acres capable of being turned into arable and pasture lands, at present wholly uncultivated, which, at the same rate, would maintain nearly twenty millions more. So that if these data are correct it will follow that about one hundred and twenty millions of human beings in the first view, and one hundred and eighty in the second, supposing our present population to be in round numbers thirty millions, might be maintained with ease and comfort from the territory of the united kingdom alone; and supposing them

berland, the average is three quarters of an acre and upwards.—See M'Culloch, Ibid.

* The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland contains the following extent of surface of statute acres:—

	Arable and Gardens.	Meadows, Pastures and Marshes.	Wastes capable of Improvement.	Incapable of Improvement.	Summary.
England,	10,252,800	15,879,200	3,454,000	3,256,400	32,342,400
Wales,	890,570	2,226,430	530,000	1,105,000	4,752,000
Scotland,	2,493,950	2,771,050	5,950,000	8,523,930	19,738,930
Ireland,	5,389,040	6,736,240	4,900,000	2,416,664	19,441,944
British Islands,	109,630	274,060	166,000	569,469	1,119,159
	19,135,990	27,886,980	15,000,000	15,871,463	77,394,433

—Porter, i. 177.

all to be maintained on wheaten bread drawn from the arable, and butcher-meat, raised on the pasture, lands, without any intermixture of potatoes or inferior food, which is greatly more productive.*

This alternative result, immense and incredible as it may appear, would only be at the rate of two or three persons to every acre of arable and meadow land in the kingdom—a proportion which is by no means impossible, if it be considered that three-fifths of the land brought into cultivation in Great Britain and Ireland, or 27,000,000 of acres, are in meadow and pasture: that one acre in wheat is perfectly capable of producing, on an average, two quarters, that is of maintaining two human beings; and that in potatoes, according to the best authorities, it will feed three times as many.†

But it is superfluous to go into these details on speculative points never likely to be realized in practice. Suffice it to say, therefore, that, on the most moderate calculation, Great Britain and Ireland are capable of maintaining, in ease and affluence, one hundred and twenty millions of inhabitants. This proceeds on the supposition, that the whole mountain and waste land is deducted as altogether unprofitable, and that the remaining arable land is divided into three parts, of which two-thirds are entirely set aside for luxuries and conveniences, and that the remaining third alone is devoted to the staple food of man, partly in wheat and partly in potatoes. These results will appear startling to those who are not accustomed to grapple with such subjects, and consider the almost boundless

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 176, 179.

† Ibid. i. 177. "Three times as much solid nourishment is yielded by an acre under potatoes as under wheat."—Newenham, 340; Young's Ireland, App. 24, 12.

improvement of which the earth is susceptible, but the persons entertaining such doubts will do well to turn to the Appendix,* where the details of this calculation are given, and point out what is erroneous in the data, or overstretched in the conclusions drawn. †

* Appendix, No. II.

† Similar, and still more striking results as to the almost incredible capability of the soil to maintain a vast increase of inhabitants may be drawn from the statistical condition of France. That great country, it is well known, contains far more arable land in proportion to its surface than Great Britain; for it embraces only 9,146,000 acres (Chateau Vieux) permanently waste, out of 132,630,000 acres in its whole area, whereas the British islands out of 77,000,000 statute acres contain no less than 15,871,000 that always must be utterly sterile and unproductive. (Porter, i. 177.) The arable land of France, therefore, is more than double that of the British islands; and how much less of the produce of the soil is devoted in France to horses and cattle, may be judged of from this luminous and important fact, that while in Great Britain the meadow and pasture land amounts to 27,000,000 of acres, in France it only amounts to about 24,000,000. (Chateau Vieux.)

France, therefore, contains greatly more than twice as much arable land as Great Britain, and the subsistence of the people is much less interfered with by that of animals tending to luxury or comfort. Nevertheless, France has not at this moment more than three millions of inhabitants above those of the British isles. If it contained as many inhabitants as Great Britain, in proportion to its surface, it would have, at least, sixty millions of inhabitants; and at the moderate calculation of one human being to each arable acre, which is only supposing each acre to produce one-third of the average produce of England, or one quarter an acre, it would maintain one hundred and twenty millions of souls; at two quarters, two hundred and forty millions, and at three quarters an acre, no less than three hundred and sixty millions.†

† The division of the soil of France, according to Chateau Vieux, is as follows:

	English Acres.
Total superfices,	132,646,091
Sterile and unimprovable,	9,146,091
Vineyards and plantations,	4,940,000
Forests,	16,901,279
Pasture,	2,868,721
Meadow land,	12,350,000
Artificial grasses, (Lucerne, &c.)	9,880,000
Arable land,	76,570,000
	132,646,091.—Chateau Vieux.

If such are the almost boundless capacities for producing subsistence in the British islands, it seems equally clear, that, if the whole resources of the country were applied to that object, which is the proper way to try the test of the relative powers of production and population, the agricultural produce of the islands could be raised infinitely faster than would be required for the consumption of the human race. It is no doubt difficult for the imagination to follow out such a progress, as moral causes render it extremely improbable, and, in fact, altogether impossible, in such a state of society as that which now exists in the British isles; but a very little consideration and reflection on facts familiar to the observation of every one, must be sufficient to show that the general result is well founded, and, in fact, much within the physical capacity of rural production from human labour.

Every person has seen waste lands brought into cultivation within the last ten years, which are now bearing ample crops of wheat, oats, or potatoes. Every person also has seen a great many acres of such newly improved land worked up into a state of garden cultivation, and by a sufficient expenditure of labour, money, and manure, brought, in a few years more, into the highest state of agricultural production. It is perfectly possible, therefore, to bring moor land not only into an arable state, but into the highest state of horticulture in twenty years. All that is required is a sufficient application of human strength, industry, and capital.

But if this is true of ten acres or a hundred acres, it is equally true of ten millions of acres or a hundred millions of acres, provided always, which is the sup-

position put on the other side, there are abundance of hands to apply the requisite labour. The proportion is the same; the fundamental fact, that the labour of one man's hands is much more than adequate for his own support, runs through the whole question, and regulates the fortunes of man from the first to the last moments of his progress. If it is possible to raise an uncultivated moor or piece of waste land from a state of nature to the highest state of garden cultivation within twenty years, much more is it possible to effect the like transformation upon an island such as Great Britain or Ireland, upon which much more than half the labour requisite to effect such a change has already been applied. That is just as clear as that a man who has already got over fifty miles of a road will sooner, at the same pace, get over the next fifty, than one who, at the same rate of progress, has to go over the whole hundred.

Let any man consider a field, a farm, or a parish with which he is familiar. Can he entertain a moment's doubt, that if he had an unlimited command of labour, money, and manure, he could raise the produce of the soil to the highest pitch of garden cultivation in twenty years, or even in half that time? By simply subjecting it to the cultivation of the spade and the hoe instead of the plough, the produce of most parts of it would, in a single year, be increased a half; and by introducing generally the system of tile furrow-draining, and applying manure in abundance, it might, in another year, be increased at least another half. The mere breaking up the meadow and grass lands (27,000,000 acres) would at once make room for as many millions of human beings! that is, furnish subsist-

ence to nearly double its present (1840) population. It is practically known to every Scotch farmer that, by the simple introduction of tile-draining, the produce of every soil, if at all wet, is at once raised a half, often doubled. No practical farmer in the kingdom will hesitate a moment in admitting that, *give him men and money enough*, he could raise the produce of any field, farm, or parish to the highest state of garden culture in ten years. And what is true of any field, farm, or parish with an ample supply of men and money, is equally true of any parish, county, or kingdom, if the benefit of a corresponding amount of human power is secured to it.*

It is no answer to this to say that the state of society in these islands, the appropriation of all the land they contain, and the investment of a large part of their capital in commerce or manufactures, precludes the possibility, practically speaking, of such an application of the whole power and resources of the state to the labours of agriculture. That is perfectly true, but it has no bearing on the question, which is, not what is the direction that human industry will take in every advanced stage of society, but what is the fundamental relation established by nature between the growth of population and the production of subsistence? If moral causes in the later stages of society, by an invincible attraction, draw a large portion of human exertion into commerce and manufactures,

* The land included in the Inclosure Bills, passed since 1826, has amounted to no more than 247,000 acres; while the numbers added to the population in the same time have been 2,703,707 souls; thus affording not a *tenth* part of an acre per head for each additional inhabitant. This must be considered as a farther proof of the increased productiveness of the soil during the last five years.—Porter, i. 178.

the same moral causes, by an equally invincible influence, if not counteracted by moral corruption or oppressive government, limit the growth of population in these advanced stages. What these moral causes are will be fully unfolded in the sequel.* The question at present is, what is the proportion between the powers of population and production? And if Mr Malthus is entitled to take, as he unquestionably is, the extreme case of an old state doubling its inhabitants in five-and-twenty years, it is equally allowable to take an equally extreme and improbable case, to illustrate the powers of production on the other. And there cannot be the smallest doubt, that if human labour was felt in any country to be deficient in order to enable the subsistence to keep pace with the population, the high price of agricultural produce and the high wages of agricultural labour would speedily attract hands from other employments into that one, and that, what between interest and necessity, the nation would gradually more and more be transferred from a commercial into an agricultural state.

If the preceding arguments are duly weighed, they will probably, by all impartial persons, be deemed conclusive of the present question; but there are a great variety of other considerations which lead to the same result, and which might render it perfectly safe to abandon all that has gone before as untenable or absurd. The strength of the case in Mr Malthus's words is such, that it will admit of almost any concession.

I. That all the other classes of society, who are either engaged in arts or manufactures, or maintained in idleness, are fed by the labours of the husbandman, either

* See below, Chap. III.

in their own or some neighbouring country, is self-evident. It is the surplus produce of the agriculturists which avowedly maintains all the other classes of the community. Mr Malthus's position is, that this surplus produce is greatest in the early stages of society, and least in the most advanced, because it is then that the vast and increasing multiplication of the human species presses with most weight upon the springs of human subsistence. Now what is the fact, and what has been the fact from the earliest ages of the world to this time on this subject? Has it always been found that arts, commerce, and opulence have prevailed most in the first stages of society, and that, as society advances, their numbers gradually dwindle away, until the necessities of their situation and the rapidly declining produce of agricultural labour force all hands, as a matter of necessity, into the cultivation of the soil? Has this been the case in any age of the world, or is it the case now? Did the arts and manufactures of Italy in ancient times decline under the rule of the Emperors, and was the whole population of the Italian peninsula absorbed in the cultivation of the soil, to the extinction of arts and manufactures, in its declining days, when a thousand years had sprinkled the snows of age on the Roman Empire? Is this the case with Great Britain at this time, when the same period has elapsed, since the era, when the foundation of the empire was laid in the days of Alfred by the union of the Heptarchy? Is the whole population of the British Islands gradually converging towards the cultivation of the soil under the pressure of population and subsistence, and in the vain hope of extracting, by increased labour from an exhausted territory, subsistence for our

present inhabitants? Is America teeming with the riches of its virgin soil and profuse agricultural produce; the great seat from which exports of manufactured articles proceed to all parts of the world?

The fact is and ever has been, just the reverse. History has recorded that Italy, in ancient times, so far from having been cultivated to the utmost, declined in agricultural produce with the progress of the empire; that its inhabitants were principally to be found in towns subsisting on arts and manufactures; and it is to the great decay of the rural population that Gibbon ascribes the inability of the empire in its later stages to resist the attacks of the barbarians.* So far from the population of Great Britain being driven generally by necessity to the cultivation of the soil, nearly three-fourths of them are engaged in other pursuits, having no tendency whatever to yield subsistence, and are fed almost entirely by the other fourth employed in the labours of agriculture.† So far from America teeming with artisans and commerce fed by its vast agricultural produce, it imports annually from twelve to fourteen millions worth of British manufactures, which are paid for, not in grain, which the British corn law in general excludes, but in remittances of money or cotton, to carry on her increasing commercial establishments. In every quarter and age of the world an advanced stage of society has been distinguished by the great increase of commerce and manufactures, and the earliest by the decided preponderance of the agricul-

* Gibbon, iii. 66, vii. 212, v. 263. Sismondi, Hist. de France, i. 82.

† Out of a population of 3,414,175 families in Great Britain, 961,134 families are employed in the production of food, being at the rate of 282 in each 1000, or between a third and a fourth of the inhabitants.—Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 59.

tural class over every other. Now, how could this vast increase of artisans and manufactures in the later eras of society have been fed and maintained, if the theory were true, that the later stages of society are those which are above all others distinguished by the fatal pressure of population upon subsistence?

Is it not clear that the existence of such a pressure must, in the later ages of every empire, have forced mankind progressively, and at length entirely, into the cultivation of the soil, just as the rise of a tide drives all the animated beings upon a rock in the ocean to the remaining dry portions? Is not, therefore, the immense extent of arts, commerce, and manufactures in the later stages of every great empire in the world, and in particular in the British dominions, a decisive proof that, so far from population in the later stages of society pressing upon subsistence, subsistence is constantly acquiring an additional ascendency over population? And of the extent of this preponderance, and the small number of agriculturists who are required in an advanced stage of cultivation to raise subsistence for the other classes, we have authentic evidence in the fact mentioned by Mr Porter, that, in Great Britain at this time, "taking the best data that can be had, it appears that the labour of nineteen families is required to produce annually 1160 quarters of all kinds of grain; being at the rate of 61 quarters by each family."* Now a quarter of grain is ample food for a human being for a year; and, supposing four quarters to be the average consumption of a family, it thus appears that, in the present state of British agriculture, the annual labour of one family is capable of supporting fifteen.

* Porter, i. 59.

II. That this progressive increase of the powers of production over those of population, even when population is advancing at the most rapid rate in the later stages of society, actually exists, and is universally founded in the laws of nature, is abundantly evident, from the statistical details which exist of the proportion of a people in every state engaged in the cultivation of the soil. In America, where rich waste land is so abundant, and subsistence is to be had in such profusion, the proportion of the cultivators of the soil to the other classes of society is about 12 to 1. In Poland, the granary of England in periods of scarcity, the cultivators are to the artisans and shopkeepers as 20 to 1. In France at this moment, 21,500,000 agriculturists are required to maintain themselves, and 10,500,000 of the other classes.* Whereas in Great Britain, as already mentioned, out of 3,414,000 families, only 961,000 are employed in the production of food, that is to say, each agriculturist supports himself and at least three and a half more of the other unproductive inhabitants of the empire.† In Ireland, where, although the population is more dense, agriculture is in a far ruder and more imperfect state, out of 1,385,066 families only 884,339 are employed in agriculture, being the proportion of 1000 to 638.‡ Thus England, at once the oldest, the most peopled, and the richest commercial and manufacturing country known in existence, is the one in which the *smallest* number of cultivators is required to maintain the other classes of society. In America and Poland, where waste land is most abundant, and agriculture is comparatively in its infancy, the proportion of the other classes fed by the

* Dupin, Force Commercial de France, i. 3.

† Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 59. ‡ Ibid.

agriculturist is the least; and so great is this difference, that, whereas in Poland, the great granary of Europe, twenty agriculturists are required to produce a surplus for one manufacturer, and in America twelve are required for the same purpose, in France only two cultivators are needed to support one manufacturer, while in Great Britain one agriculturist is able to maintain in ordinary years above *three* manufacturers.

These facts demonstrate, that, so far from population pressing upon subsistence in the later stages of society, subsistence in those periods, if allowed fair play, acquires a decisive preponderance over population; and that the surplus produce of cultivators is continually increasing as society advances. They explain perfectly how it happens that, in the earlier ages of society, the numbers of those engaged in arts and manufactures, bear so small a proportion to those devoted to the cultivation of the soil, while in its later stages the balance turns the other way, and the number of artisans becomes, without at all outstripping the means of subsistence, twice or thrice greater than that of the cultivators. But how are these facts to be reconciled with the theory, that in the later stages of society the augmenting powers of population acquire a decisive preponderance over those of raising human food? The thing is plainly impossible; and it is well worthy of observation, that, even in Great Britain itself, this ascendency of the powers of production over those of population is daily becoming greater; for, if the reader will turn to the Appendix, he will see that while the rate of increase in the three decimal periods, from 1801 to 1831, in the agricultural counties has been

as 9, $10\frac{1}{3}$, and 7; in the manufacturing ones it has been as $16\frac{3}{4}$, $14\frac{1}{3}$, and $18\frac{1}{3}$.*

III. But thirdly, what is capital but subsistence stored up, and what is the whole wealth of the world but the accumulation of the surplus produce of the labours of the cultivators of the earth in different ages, above what was requisite for their own support? In whatever form this accumulated wealth exists, whether in that of bullion or money,—of articles of luxury,—costly edifices,—sumptuous furniture or apparel,—or productive investments, such as agricultural improvements, commercial or manufacturing establishments, roads, railways, or shipping, it is equally clear that it has been amassed by the labour of human beings, and that these human beings during the time consumed in that labour must have been maintained. The existence of capital, therefore, especially in large quantities, presupposes that there has existed a surplus produce raised by the cultivators in former ages; its continued increase presupposes the existence of a similar surplus at the time that increase is going on. If, then, the efforts of human production had a constant tendency to sink before the gigantic powers of population in the more advanced stages of society, it must of course have followed, that the annual increment of capital must have gone on declining with the progress of its more advanced stages; that the earliest ages would have been those in which it was produced in most abundance, and the latest, those in which the annual sum existing to the amount of human wealth became most inconsiderable. Is this the fact? Has it ever been the fact? Is it consistent with anything we see around us?

* Appendix, No. III.

Has it not been found, on the contrary, in every age that the earliest periods of society were those in which capital was most scanty, and received the smallest annual additions, and the latest, those in which it was most abundant? And is not the present age and this empire distinguished above all others by the extraordinary excess of capital, as clearly evinced both by the low rate of interest, and by the tendency of capitalists to seek the most foreign and remote, and often the most extravagant speculations? How is this fact, too painfully known in Great Britain, especially at this time, to require any illustration, reconcilable with the hypothesis, that the human race is subject to a constant pressure of population upon subsistence—that the former goes on in a geometrical, the latter in an arithmetical progression, and that it is this circumstance which explains the constantly increasing misery of the later stages of society? Is it not self-evident, that, if this were really true, capital, that is, stored up subsistence, would be perpetually dwindling away under the influence of this iron screw applied by nature, to the powers of production, by the superincumbent weight of population, and that the latest ages of society must inevitably in every country have been the most indigent?

It seems, therefore, in every point of view, to be abundantly clear, that the true relation between population and subsistence is that of CAUSE and EFFECT; that the labour of man's hands is, by the eternal law of nature, adequate to much more than his own support; that this superiority of the powers of production over those of population is a fundamental law of his existence, which never fails him in any pe-

riod of his progress, and that, so far from this superiority becoming less in the later stages of society, it is constantly becoming greater, and that it is owing to that excess that the accumulation of wealth, arts, commerce, and manufactures owe their existence. If these principles be well founded, it must be at once apparent that all apprehensions of the increase of population beyond the means of subsistence which the soil affords, are entirely chimerical in any particular country, until its cultivation is evidently approaching the extreme limit of perfection; and equally visionary in reference to the whole world, until the globe itself is all cultivated to its utmost.

How indefinitely distant or rather utterly impossible is the arrival of the human race at such limits in any particular country, must be evident from this consideration, that it never yet has occurred in any country in the world, and to all appearance never can occur under the present constitution of human nature. That every nation hitherto existing upon earth, of which history makes mention, has either had its population retarded and at length stopped in its later stages, or been swept away by the tide of foreign conquest, is evident from the most cursory survey of human affairs, and has always been the subject of proverbial remark. The ruined cities and desert plains which now mark the spots which in Asia were once the seat of mighty and populous empires, are sufficient to show with what unerring steps, the periods of decay have hitherto arrived to the greatest nations upon earth. Whether the states of modern times possess, from the influence of freedom, knowledge, and the Christian religion, any stronger principle of vitality

than those of antiquity, will form the subject of discussion in the sequel of this work.* But even the most sanguine believers in the perfectibility of the species will probably admit that the approach of the human race to the limits of their possible increase in any of the European monarchies is postponed for an indefinite number of ages; and that there is little in the present state of society in the British islands to warrant the belief that their empire is to share in the immortality of the human race.

With respect to the chances of the whole earth being cultivated to its utmost, and of the dreadful catastrophe occurring of mankind arriving at the utmost limits of subsistence, with the habits of increase suited to a progressive state of existence still prevalent among them, it will be considered in a subsequent chapter, whether the *moral* constitution of human nature renders such an event possible; and whether, even if the earth were entirely peopled and cultivated, those habits in regard to increase must not previously have arisen in all ranks of society which are suited to a stationary order of things. There appears, moreover, to be a mysterious law of nature, which, by the irresistible force of external events, renders the human race stationary or declining in one part of the world when it is advancing rapidly in another; which impels civilisation perpetually in one direction, which has hitherto been in the course of the sun; which prevents the revival of the human race, at least, for a very long period in its ancient seats, and renders a large part of the world always fallow in the great husbandry of nature. Notwithstanding the vast and rapid increase

* Infra, Chap. IX.

of the human race for the last two centuries in the European states, particularly in the British islands and the American colonies, it is doubtful whether the despotism of the east has not destroyed as much as the liberty of the west has called into being, and whether the world is in any considerable degree more populous at this time than it was in that of Augustus.*

But without dwelling on this speculative point, it is sufficient to refer to the physical capabilities of the globe, to show how extremely chimerical are all such apprehensions. The habitable terrestrial globe contains 37,673,000 square geographical miles, of which it is probable that upwards of 20,000,000 are available for the subsistence of the human race. This is making a very large deduction for the arid deserts of the torrid, or the frozen mountains of the arctic Zone. Now in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland there are 91,000 square geographical miles, and on them food is now raised for nearly 30,000,000 of human beings. If, therefore, the whole world were peopled in the same proportion as the British islands, there would be about two hundred and twenty times as many inhabitants as there now

* According to Malte Brun, the present population of Europe is about 227,000,000. Mr Gibbon reckons the population of the Roman Empire under Trajan and the Antonines at 120,000,000; but such has been the decline in the number of the human race in Asia, particularly European Turkey and Persia, that it is more than doubtful whether, upon the whole, the world is more populous now than it was in ancient times. Mr Hume was inclined to think in 1775, that it was less populous than it was in the time of Trajan; but there has been a great increase since that time in the British islands, and in Russia, and a still greater in the United States of America, but still it is doubtful if the whole, taken together, has compensated the decay of the human species in Asia Minor, Turkey, and Persia.—See Gibbon, Chap. i., and Hume's Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations.

are in the united kingdom, or the globe would contain six thousand six hundred millions, being at least eight times its present population.* When the vast superiority of the productive powers of the southern regions of the globe are taken into consideration, as well as the great increase which it has been shewn the British islands themselves can be brought to yield; when it is recollected, that, in almost all the southern climates, two crops are obtained in the year from soil where irrigation can be attained; that the potato will maintain three times as many human beings on an equal extent of ground as wheat, and the banana, according to Humboldt, five-and-twenty times as many,† it is not exceeding the bounds of reasonable argument to hold that this number of six thousand six hundred millions might with ease be raised to twenty thousand millions, being above twenty times the whole probable population of the globe at this period.

It is observed by Mr Malthus, that, from all the accounts we have of China and Japan, it may be doubted whether they could be made to double their subsistence in any period of time. Let us test the accuracy of this statement by the more correct statistical information which the researches of modern times have brought to light.‡ In China, according to Humboldt, the superficial area amounts to 463,000 square marine leagues, and the population, according to him, is 175,000,000. If it were peopled in the same proportion as the British islands, which contain 2,250 to the square league, it would contain 980,000,000,

* The total population of the globe is estimated by the best authorities at about 800,000,000.—Malte Brun and Balbi.

† Humboldt, iii. 29. 36. ‡ Ibid. xi. 55.

or nearly five times its present inhabitants, according to one estimate, and three times by another; and if it were cultivated as Great Britain might be, as already shown,* on the principle of every third acre being devoted to the staple food of man, and the remaining two for his luxuries, it would maintain 2300,000,000 of inhabitants, or above twelve times its present population.

The peninsula of India, according to Humboldt, contains 109,200 square marine leagues, and 134,000,000 of inhabitants.† If these were peopled in the same proportion as the British islands, which contain 2,250 to the square league, they would contain about 250,000,000 of inhabitants, or nearly double their present number, and if they were cultivated in the same way as the British islands might be on the principles above laid down, it would maintain at least 1,000,000,000 of souls.

To illustrate this still further. The Chinese empire, including Chinese Tartary, contains, according to Malte Brun and Balbi, 5,350,000 square geographical miles, which over the whole vast extent are peopled only at the small rate of 37.3 to every square mile. China proper contains 1,297,000 square miles, which, taking the population of the empire at 150,000,000, which is Malte Brun's estimate, is 117 to the square mile, the great difference being owing to the vast uncultivated tracts of Chinese Tartary. Hindostan contains 1,280,000 square miles, and 134,000,000 souls, which is at the rate of 104 to the square mile; and Japan contains 240,000 square miles, and 25,000,000 of souls, being at the rate also of 125 to the square mile. In England, again, exclusive of Scotland, there are no less

* Ante, I. p. 47. † Humboldt, xi. 57.

than 258 inhabitants to the square mile, and in Ireland 263; so that the present population of England is above twice as dense as that of Hindostan, Japan, or China proper, and above ten times that of China, including Chinese Tartary. What, then, must be the capability for the increase of the human race in these countries which Mr Malthus has selected as containing nearly the utmost density of population, when it has been seen of what a great increase of subsistence the British Isles themselves are susceptible? Doubtless there are great tracts of waste lands in these countries, but so there are also in England; and if the great superiority in the fertility of these warm climates is taken into consideration, there can be no doubt that the average produce which they might yield per square mile of their whole surface is much greater than could by possibility be extracted from the comparatively sterile and inhospitable soil of these islands.* It is not to be imagined from these facts that the travellers were in error who have so often described, in glowing colours, the vast population and admirable culture of the districts they traversed in China and Japan. The error lay in supposing that the whole country was cultivated and peopled in the same proportion, which is just as great an error as it would be to imagine that the whole of Great Britain is as finely cultivated as the road side from Dover to London, or as densely peopled as a circle with a radius of twelve miles around Manchester.

These propositions may be stated with the greater confidence that they coincide entirely with the conclusions to which the most eminent geographers have

* Malte Brun, x. 606. Humboldt, ii. 56.

been led on the same subject. "The soil of Europe," says Malte Brun, "could afford ample food for a thousand millions of inhabitants, being nearly five times its present numbers. If all Spain were peopled as much as the district of Guipuscoa, in other words, in the proportion of 2090 to the square league, its inhabitants would amount to above 30,000,000, being three times its present population. If the whole of Portugal were peopled in the same proportion as the province between the Douro and the Minho, it would contain 10,707,000 inhabitants, being considerably more than three times the whole of the present inhabitants of the kingdom of Portugal, who are above 3,000,000."*

The same inference regarding the superior powers of production to population is to be drawn from the accounts we have of the most ancient and peopled countries of antiquity. Egypt is proverbially known as one of the most ancient seats of the human race, and its stupendous monuments raised nearly four thousand years ago will remain to the end of the world a durable proof of the immensity and extent of its early population. D'Anville computes the cultivable land in ancient Egypt at 2,100 square leagues,† being little more than a fifth part of the surface of the British Isles; and the population of ancient Egypt is estimated at 8,000,000.‡ Egypt, therefore, was considerably more populous in proportion to its cultivable extent than the British Islands, and population had been dense there from the very earliest

* Malte Brun, ii. 197.

† D'Anville, Egypte Ancienne, 23.

‡ Josephus De Bell. Jud, ii. c. 26, and Gillies's Greece, v. 141.

ages. Yet so far were the numbers of the species from pressing on the means of subsistence, even in the latest periods of its prosperity, that subsistence had immensely outstripped population; the Delta was the well known granary of Rome, even so early as the time of Cæsar; this continued to be the case during all the subsequent emperors; and it was the common lamentation of the Roman historians, in Gibbon's words, "that the mistress of the world depended for her subsistence upon the floods of the Nile."

The plain of Mesopotamia, again, was a still earlier seat of the human race; its unparalleled fertility attracted and multiplied mankind in the first ages after the flood, and the Tower of Babel, still remaining in the gigantic hill of the Birs Nimrod, survives, and will for ever survive, a monument at once of the truth of the Mosaic history, and the vast early population of that highly-favoured region. Such was the enormous population which this extraordinary plain nourished, that Nineveh and Babylon, its first capitals, built within a short distance of each other, far exceeded any modern city both in extent and population; and the latter, whose walls extended twelve miles every way, covered 126 square miles of surface, or nearly eight times the modern city and suburbs of London.* Like all Asiatic cities it doubtless contained within these walls, palaces, parks, and even cultivated land; but in other places it was covered with crowded streets, the houses of which were three and four stories high.† And after making every allowance for the ground not covered with buildings, it con-

* Reynolds's Geography of Herodotus, p. 341.

† Herodotus, i. c. 180.

tained, according to the most judicious writers, twice, perhaps three times as many inhabitants as modern London at this time. " Nevertheless," says Gillies,* " in the narratives of ancient writers, we hear nothing of that scarcity which prevails in the populous cities of China, now the greatest in Asia; and which reduces their wretched inhabitants to the meanest shifts and coarsest garbage for subsistence. The Babylonians, on the contrary, are described as *living in great plenty*, and the upper classes as enjoying the habitual use of expensive luxuries." And so far was even this vast population from exhausting the productive powers of Mesopotamia, that fifteen hundred years after Herodotus‡ had visited it in this unparalleled state of grandeur, and after Babylon had been overturned by Cyrus, and had yielded to the decay of time, its productive powers were still unexhausted; Ctesiphon, Seleucia and Bagdad successively rose to the rank of mighty capitals in its immediate neighbourhood, and were constructed in great part out of its very ruins;† for above a thousand years they continued to be the capitals of a mighty empire, which more than once conquered the majesty of Rome; and when, at length, the corruption and vices of these great cities called for a signal chastisement, it was the magnitude of their riches, the growth of the vast and still continuing surplus of their agricultural produce, which attracted the destroyers from the plains of Tartary, and wrapt these ancient and still enduring abodes of plenty in the desolating whirlwind of Timour's cavalry.

The history of Rome affords a still more remarkable example of the same principles. Not only do the

* Gillies's Greece, v. 238. † Ibid. v. 238. ‡ Herodot. i. 195.

accounts of all ancient writers, but decisive and authentic facts recorded in history, demonstrate that the population at least of Southern Italy in ancient times was very great. Thirty independent states, or tribes, as we should call them, cultivated with assiduous labour the plain which is now flooded with the Pontine marshes; and Camillus, with fifty thousand men, for ten years, besieged Veiæ, though it was no farther from Rome than London from St Albans. The eternal city is stated by Mr Gibbon to have contained at its highest point of elevation three millions of inhabitants; and he estimates the total population of the empire at 120 millions.* But so far was the influx of people to the heart of this immense dominion from exhausting the productive powers of the soil of Italy, or pressing upon the utmost limits of human subsistence, that the effect was the very reverse; food was so abundant that its cultivation ceased to be profitable on the Italian fields; corn was imported from the distant provinces, while the Italian plains were almost entirely engrossed in pasturage, which gradually swallowed up the greater part of even the arable surface of the country; and there remains to this day an authentic record, which proves that the fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and delicious retirements of the Roman citizens, extending between the Tibur and the Silarus, contained on an actual survey, within sixty years after the death of Constantine, before the footsteps of the barbarians had yet been heard in Italy, no less than 330,000 English acres of uncultivated land, which had formerly been under the plough and paid taxes to the state.†

* Gibbon, i. 68, c. 2. † Ibid. iii. 87, c. 17.

There is no reason to conclude, therefore, either from what we know at present of the most populous and highly cultivated countries of the world, or from what we learn of similar states in ancient times, that the greatest increase of human beings has ever been attended, or ever can be attended, with any pressure of population upon the productive powers of agricultural labour; but, on the contrary, the superiority of production to population is constantly increasing with the progress of society, and is generally greatest at the time when moral and extraneous causes have induced the decay of the population, or the downfal of the community in which it had arisen.

But it is putting the case much too favourably for Mr Malthus and his partisans in the doctrine of the pressure of population upon subsistence, to select merely for an illustration of the general law of Nature, those countries, such as China, Japan, or the British islands, in which population appears in the densest form that has yet been recorded in the history of the world. To restore the balance, it is but fair to take a few instances on the other side, and examine the capabilities of human increase which exist in the rich, but desert, or but imperfectly explored regions of the globe. If we do this, and sit down in the "lodge of the wayfaring man in the wilderness," what a stupendous prospect is exhibited on all sides of the almost boundless capabilities for increase which are afforded to the human race! The basin of the Mississippi alone contains, according to Chevalier, 1,015,000 square geographical miles, or more than eleven times the whole surface of the British isles, and nearly seven times that of the whole kingdom of France. The whole of that splen-

did surface is not only rich and fertile, but watered with noble rivers, and almost entirely destitute of hills or sterile spots. * If it was peopled in the same proportion as the British Isles, this portion of America alone, lying between the Alleghany and the Rocky mountains, would contain above three hundred and fifty millions of inhabitants. South and North America contain nearly 12,000,000 square miles, of which 6,000,000 may be considered as susceptible of cultivation, and of productive powers, as Humboldt has told us, far greater than even the most favoured regions of Europe. If these six millions of square miles were cultivated, so as to produce even the same amount of subsistence as the British islands, they would yield subsistence to fifteen hundred millions. It is no wonder that both Humboldt and General Miller, when traversing these boundless tracts of fertile land, where labour for three days in the week would make any family comfortable, and the produce of wheat, under even the most wretched culture, was never less than seventy, sometimes an hundred fold, should have been impressed with a sense of the boundless immensity of the gifts of Nature, and of the unhappy effects of those arbitrary institutions, and that squalid poverty, which in so many places retains multitudes in indigence and suffering in a world groaning under the riches of nature. †

To illustrate the vast capability of the globe, there is subjoined in the Appendix a table from the latest and best authorities, ‡ of the extent of surface of the present countries in the world, and their density of

* Chevalier's America, i. 62, 387.

† Miller, i. 146–147, 336. Humboldt, ix. 250, 152.

‡ Appendix, No. IV.

population as compared with the square league; and such is the magnitude of these results, and the extraordinary evidence which they afford of the bounty of the Creator to the human species, that, like the magnitude of the planets, or the distances of the fixed stars, they exceed the hopes of the most ardent, and elude the grasp of the most powerful mind.

It must be evident, however, even to the most superficial observer, that this question of the ultimate capacities of any particular country, or of the whole world, for raising subsistence, are not the data on which the prosperity of mankind is mainly dependent; and they have been dwelt upon at such length, and with such minuteness in this chapter, chiefly from the consideration of the deserved authority of the eminent author by whom the opposite doctrine was first started, and of the great number of respectable and highly meritorious writers, who, while they have been led by actual observation to doubt the soundness of his practical conclusions, have yet been carried away by the imposing aspect of his general argument.* But it

* Among these the author must enumerate a near and dear relative, whose admirable work on the Management of the Poor in Scotland has completely demonstrated the ruinous practical results which have followed from the application of Mr Malthus's principles to the poor of this country. "Mr Malthus and the economists," says Dr Alison, "maintain that the natural tendency of the human species is to increase and multiply in a geometrical progression, while the food of man in any country can only be made to increase in an arithmetical progression; that, therefore, in every country which has been long inhabited, the population must necessarily press on the means of subsistence, and that it is prevented from increasing beyond these limits only by the *positive* checks of vice and misery, or by the *preventive* check of moral restraint. So far his reasoning seems to me to be perfectly sound and irrefragable; and for the satisfactory illustrations which he has given of the natural tendency of population to outstrip the means of sub-

is evident that the true question in which mankind are really interested is very different: that the main point in civilized society is not what are the productive powers of nature in the soil, but what are the means which the human race have *for getting at these powers*, and rendering them available for general happiness; and that those human institutions are most favourable to human multiplication and happiness, which provide in the most effectual manner at once for the increase of the species, and the regulation of that increase in the way which the welfare and interest of society require.

It is in the infancy of society, or the first ages of cultivation only, that the whole, or the greater portion of mankind are engaged in the culture of the fruits of the earth. Before many generations have passed over, a great surplus is found to have accumulated in the hands of the cultivators, while their wants and necessities indispensably require that a considerable portion of the inhabitants should be detached from the pursuits of agriculture, and devoted to those

sistence,—of its rapid progress in new and improving countries,—of the checks imposed on it more or less directly by the gradually increasing difficulty of procuring subsistence as society advances,—and of the latent power in all long inhabited countries, of quickly repairing the injury done by any cause of unusual mortality, he deserves immortal honour. It seems to me, not only that these principles are perfectly just, but that they must form the basis of all legitimate speculation and reasoning on the subject of poverty, its evils and remedies." (On the Management of the Poor in Scotland, by Dr Alison, p. 63.)

Such a testimony from such a quarter affords the strongest proof of the stronghold which Mr Malthus's abstract principles have got, even of those who are most opposed to his practical results, and who have been most successful in refuting them, and amply justifies the minuteness of the foregoing disquisition.

arts and handicrafts which are soon found to be not less essential than the labours of the plough to the comfort and embellishment of human existence. Thence arises the separation of professions, and the establishment of arts, commerce, and manufactures, and so soon did they begin to flourish in the first ages of the world, and so indissolubly wound up from the outset of his career was manufacturing with agricultural employment, that in the earliest records of man, and immediately after the first separation of the patriarchal families, it is by dwelling "in the *cities* of the plain," that the agricultural race of men were distinguished from the Nomad tribes, who followed the tents of their fathers on the plain of Shinar.

When society has assumed this more complicated form, it is not upon the mere abstract powers of the soil to yield additional subsistence, but the means which the circumstances of society afford to every individual in the community to obtain a share of those fruits, that the encouragement to population really depends. On the one hand, the whole territory of the country is soon appropriated and divided among separate proprietors, who cultivate their possessions by the labour of slaves whom they maintain, or of free servants whom they have hired, while at least a moiety of the whole population is employed in the arts of cities, or in the pursuits of commerce or manufactures. When this state of matters has arrived, it is not so much on the capability of the soil, as the amount of the wages which can be obtained for employment, that the welfare of the great mass of the community depends; and it is THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR which, by determining the amount of wages

which the working-classes are to receive, becomes the principal regulator of the principle of increase. The great object, therefore, of inquiry comes to be, what are the circumstances in the progress of society, which augment or retard the demand for labour, and what are the changes in the tastes or habits of the people which make their rate of increase obedient to, or irrespective of, the varying demand for the produce of their toil? It is on this inquiry that the welfare of the species is mainly dependent, and to its illustration that the following pages are directed. No more interesting or elevating subject of inquiry can be proposed to the human mind; and in the prosecution of it, ample grounds will appear for gratitude to the Wisdom that governs, and hatred at the Vices that desolate the world.

"Whatever," says Dr Johnson, "makes the past or the future predominate over the present exalts us in the scale of thinking beings." When future ages shall come to reflect upon the fact, that for forty years the wisest philosophers, and the ablest statesmen, in an age boasting of the highest intellectual acquirements, implicitly adopted a theory in regard to the impossibility of making subsistence permanently keep pace with population, which is directly contrary to the experience of every age, and inconsistent with the state which society had assumed in the very country where the doctrine first originated, they will regard this as one of the most singular instances of the truth of the saying of the great sage of the nineteenth century, and perhaps arrive at the conclusion, that the most enlightened age, equally with the rudest, is incapable of resisting the weight of con-

siderations which strike the senses. It was by fixing their minds upon *present* objects, and reasoning on mankind, in general, from the example of the great increase of the Irish poor, and the American colonies, which immediately pressed on their attention, that nearly two generations have been imbued with this extraordinary delusion. Struck with the importance of the phenomena there exhibited, they have overlooked alike the history of the nations who have preceded, and the capacities for increase provided for those which are to follow them. The rapidity of progress in these two countries, which, as will be amply shown in the sequel, has arisen from extraneous and transitory causes, has been considered as the ordinary law of human increase: they have been regarded not as the exception but the rule. And what is singular and worthy of observation, these principles were generally conceived to be indisputable, just because the history of the world had afforded no instance in which their error could be brought to the test; the powers of production had everywhere so completely outstripped those of population, that their relative proportion was overlooked; the strength of the moral barriers provided by nature against an over increase of mankind was such, that it was never suspected how far even the most peopled communities were within the physical limits to their farther increase; and man was led to doubt the bounty of his Creator, from the magnitude of that very bounty having everywhere prevented him from approaching its limits.

If Man had been destined merely to exist, like the inferior animals, upon the fruits of the earth, he might have gone on increasing from generation to generation, like the back-woodsmen in America, and at

no very distant period overspread the whole earth with his descendants. But it was not in so hurried a manner that the great year of existence was intended to be passed, nor for the gratification merely of his animal wants that this race was implanted in the earth. He was intended to advance in the individual and the species; to rise from the grossness of animal to the dignity of intellectual nature; in the words of his Creator, he was ordained not merely to "replenish" the earth, but to "subdue it." To him were ultimately destined the command of the elements, and the powers of thought; the fervour of genius, and the dignity of intellect; the heroism of virtue, and the constancy of misfortune. For these elevated purposes it was essential that the progress of the species should not be too rapid; that the earth should not be replenished merely with rude and unthinking husbandmen; that his command over the elements should increase with the elements with which he had to contend; and that the growth of the human mind should keep pace with the enlargement of the species. Such a provision is made in the varying wants and desires which arise in the human breast; in the blind impulses which actuate him at one period, and the far-seeing sagacity which directs him at another; in the bursting vigour and activity which animate him in one stage of his progress, and the decline and decrepitude which enfeeble him at another. Unlike the inferior animals, which at once multiply up to the measure assigned them by nature, many ages elapse during the childhood of his being. The infancy of the race is as long as that of the individual. Long as his species has covered the earth, it has not

yet entered upon the manhood of existence. The corrupted communities and now decayed empires which have successively risen and fallen during this constant but unobserved progress, have been swept away when they had performed their mission in human affairs. There are destroyers provided for the carrion of nations, not less than the corpses of individuals; pernicious remains are not permitted to taint the moral any more than the material atmosphere; unseen in ordinary times, the vultures of the North appear in the distance, when their cleansing is required; the Scythian cavalry scent from afar the odour of human corruption, and the punishment of the vices of nations conducts the mighty system of human advancement.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE CHANGES IN THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY WHICH LIMIT THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE.

ARGUMENT.

Necessity for the growth of Restraints on the Principle of Increase, as Society advances—They arise accordingly from the developement of the Reason of Man—Effects of general instruction on the rate of Increase—From the influence of artificial Wants—Their vast and progressive importance—From the desire of accumulating Property and bettering one's condition—From the distinction of ranks and the desire of rising in the world—From the diminished fecundity of marriages in mature life—And the mortality of great cities—Importance and progressive operation of these limitations to Population.

How necessary soever a rapid increase of mankind may be in early times, it is evident not only that the necessity for this unlimited operation of the principle of population diminishes in the progress of society, and that a period necessarily arrives when some powerful restraint must be imposed upon the mulitplication of mankind. With the introduction of regular government, and the establishment of a moderate degree of civil liberty, the most powerful causes of destruction are removed. The improvement of art, and the growth of capital, multiplies to an incredible degree the power of augmenting human subsistence; while the prospect of enjoying the fruits of this toil, gradually reconciles all ranks to habits of continued industry. In such circumstances, the extension of the human species rapidly ensues; and in proportion to that extension are the means of farther advance which are afforded.

It has already been shown, that in the first ages of the world, and in an infant state of society at any period, the want which is most severely felt is, that of man to carry on the numerous undertakings which are everywhere required—to clear forests, drain marshes, cultivate plains, construct roads, and build cities. The difficulty which becomes most pressing in its advanced periods, is *employment* to engage, and subsistence to feed, the multitudes who are continually brought into the world. The disproportion between the number of mankind and the extent of nature seems prodigious in the infancy of the world; but as their numbers increase, the relation changes. Human labour appears, and is found by experience to be commensurate to the greatest undertakings; the species seems capable of an unlimited increase, until at length the proportion turns the other way; the apprehensions of men take a different direction, and the earth, notwithstanding its extent, is thought to be inadequate to the possible multiplication of the species.

The important law of nature, already so fully considered, which renders the labour of one man *more than adequate* to his own support, and, consequently, gives to any conceivable multiplication of the species the means, while there remains land in the world to cultivate, of providing more food than is requisite for their own subsistence, secures in every age this first element of comfort to the human race. But though subsistence in abundance *upon the whole* may be provided for the human species, it does not follow, that in *particular situations* there may not be a difficulty in getting at it; the means of yielding it may be superabundant in one quarter, and drawing towards

their limits in another; the demand for labour, which alone gives to man in civilized life the key to the storehouse of nature, may be stationary or declining; and the interests of society may require a limit to be placed in a particular situation to human increase. Such a state of things is more or less the case in all old and highly civilized communities, where it is universally felt that the multiplication of mankind, according to the habits and capacities of earlier times, would be inconvenient, and if continued unrestrained, might, in the end, become calamitous.

Such an increase of the human species, moreover, would be totally inconsistent with the intentions of Providence in the creation of man, and the obvious destiny of his intellectual powers. If all classes were to remain occupied with the cultivation of the soil, and to continue intent only on the preservation of animal existence, and the propagation of the species, the whole conveniences of life, the arts which contribute to its embellishment, the acquisitions which exalt its character and enlarge its enjoyments, the services which elevate the soul towards its final celestial destiny, would remain unknown. A stranger to the comforts, the enjoyments, and the virtues of civilized life, —destitute of all that dignifies or adorns the human character,—man would continue in his rudest state even after a large portion of the earth was subjected to his culture, and all the innumerable capacities of the human soul would remain buried under the physical wants and animal propensities of his being.

But if such would have been the condition of the species even while the means of multiplying subsistence was almost unlimited, and the earth admitted of an apparently indefinite increase of inhabitants, what

would be their situation if these means were to become exhausted, and the farther multiplication of mankind were to be prevented, by the impossibility of drawing an increase of subsistence from the soil? Such a contingency, if not prevented by moral causes, would be obviously possible, and that too at no very remote period from the creation of the human race, if men, like the inferior animals, continually and in all ages advanced to the utmost limits of subsistence? A continual pressure of population upon subsistence, an increasing poverty among the weakest part of society, must inevitably have been the result. The imagination can conceive no more terrible occurrence than that of the human race reaching the verge of subsistence, with the habits, the desires, and the occupations of the earliest age of the world still prevailing in all ranks of society.

Nothing can be more obvious, therefore, than that the interest of mankind requires that the principle of population, unrestrained in the first stages of the world, to secure the existence and extension of the species, should be gradually limited as civilisation and wealth advances, and subjected to the control of principles dependant on the circumstances in which society is placed in its later stages.

The restraints on population should evidently be of a kind calculated to *increase* as society advances, and as government and civilisation assume a more settled and perfect form. It is then that the necessity of an unlimited operation of the principle of increase ceases, because the dangers which threatened the existence of the species at an earlier period are removed. It is then that the operation of restraints on the increase of mankind becomes necessary, because a redundancy of population would defeat the ends of

human existence, and endanger the welfare of the greater part of its members.

These limitations should be of a kind connected with the *demand for labour*, and the means of obtaining an enlarged supply of subsistence for future generations.

Situated as the great body of mankind find themselves in every civilized society, it is on the demand for labour that their present welfare and their means of rearing a family is mainly dependant. This demand, therefore, affords an indication whether an increase in the labouring classes is required, or room afforded for their comfortable support. The restraints on population, therefore, must be of such a kind as to contract or expand according to the means which are afforded of employing and maintaining the poor, and they cannot rightly regulate the rate of human increase, unless they vary according to the contraction or extension of these means.

Lastly, these limitations evidently require to be *universal in their operation*, and founded on some of the strongest desires and feelings of our nature. As the instinctive principle they are destined to restrain is universal in its operation, and incessant in its effects, so the limiting principle must be proportionally general and powerful. A check intended to restrain the most ardent passions of our nature must be founded on our strongest acquired propensities.

Such a check is provided in the *artificial wants* and *habits of foresight*, which the progress of society developes. Strong as the principle of population is, experience proves that these restraining principles, when they are suffered to develope themselves, are still stronger. Their influence over the human mind in ages of civilisation and refinement becomes un-

bounded. They increase with the extension of wealth and the diffusion of useful knowledge; they derive their best support from the precepts and practice of Christianity; they expand with the growth of civil liberty; they flourish in the midst of public felicity. The nearer that a state approaches to the termination assigned by nature to its increase;—the more that a restraint upon the multiplication of its inhabitants is required,—the more powerful do these causes of retardation become. Long before society arrives at the limit where an increase of its numbers is impossible, the progress of population is checked in the order of nature, by the habits which that very state engenders, without privation or suffering having been imposed on any of its members. The moving power in this mighty change is the efforts of individuals for their own welfare; the agents by which it acts are the desires and wishes which spring up in the breasts of all classes by the progressive objects which, as society advances, are brought to bear on their minds; the foundation on which they rest is public happiness.

"If the constitution of man," says an eminent modern writer, "were composed merely of his active propensities, his condition would in a great degree resemble that of the lower animals. His REASON, however, renders his condition upon the whole essentially different from theirs. They are incapable of looking forward to consequences, or of comparing together the different gratifications of which they are susceptible, and accordingly, so far as we are able to perceive, they yield to every present impulse. But man is able to take a comprehensive survey of his various principles of action, and to form a plan of conduct for the at-

tainment of his favourite objects. Every such plan implies a power of refusing occasionally to particular active principles the gratification which they demand, from a view to the general welfare of life."*

Another essential distinction between man and the lower animals is to be found in the CHANGE which the objects of his desire undergo in the progress of society. As the condition of the inferior creation is always the same, their wants and gratifications remain for ever unchanged. In man a different and a nobler destination may be discerned. Destined as he is advanced in the individual and the species, his instincts are suited to his *progressive* nature, and adapted, not to one, but to every situation in which he can be placed, and every exigency to which he can be reduced in consequence of his physical condition. The difference between the pursuits and the objects of childhood, manhood, and old age in the individual, is not greater than between the prevailing objects of human ambition, and the ruling principles of human conduct, in the different stages of society, or in the different æras of the world.

A third distinction between man and the inferior branches of creation arises from the *gradation of ranks*, and the inequalities in the condition of life, which take their rise from the first appearance of his species upon the earth. As this gradation is universal, and as the progress of society, instead of diminishing, tends rather to increase the inequalities in the condition of mankind, it may safely be concluded that it is intended to answer some important purposes in the economy of nature. It has given, accordingly, to the human mind the means of gaining

* Dugald Stewart's Elements, p. 87.

its greatest achievements; and by conferring on some the wealth to encourage, and on others the leisure to cultivate their intellectual powers, has produced all the refinements of art, and all the blessings of knowledge among mankind.

As these three peculiarities in the condition of the human species constitute the essential distinction between man and the inferior animals, and continue permanently to mark his race, in every period of its progress, so it is from them that the limitations to the principle of increase take their rise.

I. The progressive developement of *human reason* is one of the first sources from which the restraints upon the principle of population arise. It has been already noticed, that, in the savage state, mankind, like the inferior animals, are almost entirely governed by their *instinctive* desires. As the passion of sex is one of the strongest of these instincts, it necessarily operates at that period with resistless force. Mankind there yield universally to the gratification of their desires without ever regarding the consequences, and become the parents of children, without the slightest consideration of the means whereby they are to be maintained.

Nor is this propensity to early marriage in the infancy of society either so burdensome to the individual or so hazardous to the welfare of the offspring as it becomes in later times. Placed at a distance from each other in wild and uninhabited districts, each little horde of men must depend on its own exertions for the support of life. The means of storing up subsistence in a durable form being totally unknown, and the human species being literally dependant on their

continued exertions for their daily bread, the multiplication of mankind, so far from being a burden, is an advantage. The assistance of a wife is indispensable to the management of the family, the care of the house, and the cooking of victuals: the aid of children becomes of the last importance in the defence of the tribe, the care of its herds, or the cultivation of its fields. Hence the numerous allusions in ancient Scripture to the blessing and assistance of children, and hence the remarkable feeling so universal over the east, that the greatest of all misfortunes is to die without an offspring.* And truly if the helpless situation of the aged in rude or barbarous times is considered, when their strength has forsaken them, and no means of earning their livelihood remain, it must be admitted that few prospects than that of dying childless could be more alarming. Lord Bacon has said that children in civilized times multiply the cares of life, but diminish the terrors of death: in ruder ages it may safely be affirmed, that they aid the vigour of youth, and support the weakness of age.

The developement and cultivation of Reason is the first cause of the voluntary restraints which men impose upon the increase of their number. The habit of early marriages, indispensable to the progress of the race in the first ages of the world, gradually becomes unnecessary, and at last burdensome. Where civilisation has taken a lasting root, the individual finds himself protected by the society in which he is placed. The necessity for an early marriage to form a little circle round himself is less strongly felt. The burden of an offspring increases with the increase in the wants and desires of civilized life, and with the multiplica-

* Mill's India, i. 381.

tion of those who are seeking a livelihood around him. Imprudent marriages are everywhere seen to be the source of much suffering, and frequently to involve the parents in irretrievable ruin.

The cultivation of the human mind, and the habit of restraining its passions, which the establishment of government and of good order produce, both enable men to perceive the consequences of imprudent conduct, and to withstand, from a regard to the future, the propensities which might in the end be disastrous. It is the peculiar prerogative of man, as Mr Stewart has well observed, to form the idea of happiness *upon the whole*, and to deny to a particular active propensity the gratification it demands from a view to the ultimate welfare of life. The exercise of this self-denial is not to be expected, however, unless some object exists for which it is to be incurred; and it is in vain to expect that these principles will operate generally, unless those faculties which distinguish man from the lower animals have been fully developed.

It is in this view that the instruction of mankind becomes so important an element in the formation of public happiness. Education unfolds the rational faculties of the mind, and fits men to contend with their active propensities; it enables them to survey the world in which they are placed, and to regulate their own conduct by the examples of happiness or misery which they see around them. These are precisely the habits and the views which are destined by nature to regulate the operation of the principle of increase; their developement, therefore, is materially aided by the acquisition of that character which general information is fitted to bestow.

The diffusion of instruction has a tendency to

restrain the operation of the principle of increase, both by the habits of prudence and economy which it produces, and by the means of individual elevation which it affords. The habits of moral restraint, and the desire to form the marriage union, where it can be done without imprudence, has a tendency to produce such exertions as may make some provision for the future family. The savings of preceding years are carefully preserved; the young man becomes industrious and economical, that he may have some little stock to establish himself in life.* Habits are thus acquired which are of inestimable importance, not only to the individual, but to the state of which he is a member; and which, by descending from father to son, bequeath to future ages the most invaluable of all inheritances, that of an active, frugal, and industrious peasantry.

The means of elevation, which information opens to the more highly gifted and aspiring among the lower orders, are not less instrumental in limiting the principle of population. The strongest desire in the human mind in civilized life is that of *bettering one's condition;* of rising, by prudence or exertion, above the situation in which the individual was born. Some degree of mental cultivation is indispensable towards the developement of this desire; both because it unfolds the advantages of successful industry, and the objects of ambition to which it leads, and furnishes the means of raising the aspirant above his original sphere in life. The diffusion of information, therefore, tends not only to foster the *habits* requisite for the progressive limitation of the principle

* Dewar's Ireland, p. 94.

of increase, but awakens the *desires* which hold out the strongest inducement to their acquisition.

The examples of individuals who succeed in elevating themselves above their original situation may, indeed, be few, but the influence of these examples extends over a much wider circle. Like the military honours bestowed by a successful conqueror, they excite the ambition and influence the conduct of thousands who are never destined to receive such distinction. Few may be so successful as totally to change their fortunes by such exertions; but all see the immediate prospect of improving their condition by submitting to them. Every man, how humble soever his situation, if his intellect has received any cultivation, has some object of desire which is almost within his reach, and which a slight exertion enables him to attain; some wish to gratify, some indulgence to obtain, some acquisition to make. The habit of submitting to present privation, in order to enjoy these objects, does not expire with their acquisition; but continues to influence the conduct of life, and is perpetuated by the succession of new desires or of higher objects of ambition, which spring up with the success of former exertion. The formation of these habits, and the prevalence of these desires, is the best security against the miseries of a redundant population, by accustoming the lower orders to those habits of systematic industry, and that power of provident control, which prevents its existence.

The necessity for the instruction of the lower orders is felt much more strongly in the advanced than in the early periods of society. The condition of man in the pastoral or agricultural state imprints upon his mind a *natural* education, which compensates in a

great degree for the want of that which is acquired. From the variety of occupations in which they are engaged, the difficulties with which they have to struggle, the early thought which they are compelled to exert, the solitude in which their lives are spent, and the magnificence of nature by which they are surrounded, the character of man in those situations acquires a degree of elevation and firmness almost unknown in civilized life. The division of labour, the extension of cities, and the establishment of manufactures, are in general productive of degradation to the habits of the labouring classes. The mechanic or the weaver, whose life is spent in one unvarying employment for which little skill and no thought are requisite, whose wants are supplied in the neighbourhood of his dwelling, and whose ideas are circumscribed by a few objects, amidst which he is placed, rapidly sinks into a state of mental degradation, from which the most ruinous consequences to himself and to society may be anticipated. Intoxication or licentious indulgence becomes his only enjoyment; human depravity surrounds him on every side; the sense of shame is obliterated in the multitudes by whom criminal actions are perpetrated. In no stage of society is the want of education so strongly felt, not merely to elevate the human mind, but to prevent it from sinking under the influence of the corrupted atmosphere with which it is surrounded. If the situation of a weaver in the midst of a great city, be compared with that of an Arab in the desert, or the American Indian in the forest, the truth of these observations will be very apparent.

It is important, however, that the real effects of education upon the lower orders should be understood, and that visionary consequences should not be antici-

pated from the adoption of a system which is so ardently pursued by the humane and philanthropic in this country. Great as its effects are, they reach only a *limited number* of the working-classes, and cannot be compared with the influence of artificial wants upon the great body of mankind. Few, comparatively speaking, of the poor can ever be brought to appreciate the enjoyments of knowledge, but there are hardly any who do not feel the advantages of comfort if it is once placed within their reach; many will neglect the discoveries of Newton, but hardly any are insensible to the advantages of substantial clothing or the enjoyment of a plentiful repast. It must always be recollected that the minds of the lower orders are originally the same as the higher: we must not expect a system to operate *universally* upon them which is only *partial* in its effects upon their superiors. How many of the higher orders are permanently influenced by the enjoyments of literature, or would be found willing to make any sacrifices in the vigour of life for its acquisition? How many even in the learned professions, where a certain degree of knowledge is indispensable, make study a habit, or prove by their conduct that it is one of their greatest sources of happiness? If any man has found a fifth of his acquaintances in any rank or condition of life, to whom these enjoyments were habitual, he may consider himself singularly fortunate.

In truth, the power of intellectual exertion, and the concomitant capacity for intellectual gratification, is limited to a small part of mankind, and never was intended by nature for universal diffusion. The varieties in the surface of the globe, and in the productions of the soil in different climates, is not greater than in

mental character. As the greatest portion of the world was destined for human habitations and the production of human subsistence, so it is level and adapted for these purposes. In like manner, as the great body of the people are destined by the condition of man to a life of labour and physical exertion, so their happiness is centered in physical enjoyment. And it is fortunate for them and for society that such is the constitution of their nature. If the whole of the labouring classes were to be really imbued with the love of study, and filled with the information which it produces, it would be ruinous to their happiness and their usefulness in the world. Continual dissatisfaction with their condition in life increasing, longing after pleasures and a mode of life which they could never attain, and ultimate disqualification for the discharge of their humble duties, would necessarily result from such a change. The common observation, that those among the lower orders whose taste is highly cultivated, or who distinguish themselves by their mental powers, often prove unfortunate in life, or fall into habits of intoxication and idleness, shews how generally these effects have followed from such acquisitions.

Nature has not destined all soils to produce the same fruits, but made the variety of situation and of climate the means of the interchange of different productions, and of cementing the union of mankind by the strong bond of mutual advantage. In like manner, she has not fitted all minds to achieve the same objects, or derive their enjoyments from the same pursuits, but made the capacity for happiness as varied as the employments of men, and as universal as the race itself. It is this variety in the

minds of men which combines equality in the happiness of each individual, with diversity in the spheres which they fill in life, and draws the bonds of society together from the mutual dependence of its members on each other. To expect the taste for scientific or literary enjoyment ever to be universally diffused among mankind, is as visionary as to expect the olive and the vine to flourish universally over the globe. If such a state of things arose, who would be the hewers of wood and drawers of water, that is, who would discharge the duties of nine-tenths of the human race? We may admire the talent which Lord Brougham has displayed in unfolding the enjoyments of scientific pursuits, but it is hopeless to expect that the due appreciation of the merit of his work will ever be diffused over a much more extensive sphere than the talent which created it.

While this consideration may serve to explain the melancholy fact, that the extension of education has, in situations where it is naturally engendered, had no effect in diminishing the prevalence of crime; and that those who have enjoyed its benefits are not only not less prone to depravity than their uninstructed neighbours, but perhaps more so; it not only affords no reason for abating in the exertions made for securing this benefit to the poor, but removes one of the arguments usually urged against its adoption.* If the class fitted by nature to acquire habits of study is a small part only of society, the depravity of the other classes furnishes no reason for withholding it from those to whom it may prove a benefit: because great part of

* Vide infra XI. where the effect of Education on Crime is fully discussed.

the seed is choked by briars, or perishes on the sand, it does not follow that it should not be scattered in the hope of part taking root on good soil. It is of immense importance to themselves that a part, however small, of the lower orders should be trained to habits of foresight and industry, for it is impossible to foresee how far the beneficial influence of such examples may extend: and it is of the last moment to the fortunes of the state, that the talent and energy which is scattered over the multitudes in the lower walks of life, should be brought to bear on the public welfare. From the great superiority of the lower orders to the higher in point of numbers, a much greater quantity of talent is to be found among them than among their superiors. It is in the extrication and developement of this talent, that the vast superiority of free over despotic states consists. No decay in energy or national ability is to be apprehended when it is sought for sufficiently deep among the numbers of mankind, and general corruption has not overspread the great body of the people.

In weighing the comparative benefits and dangers of general education, we must beware of being led astray by the inconveniences and evils with which it may be felt to be attended at a particular period or crisis of difficulty; and even then attend to the countervailing antidotes which it has brought into action on the other side. In moments of irritation, periods of political transition, or under the pressure of suffering, the power of reading may augment the violence of faction, and favour the spread of sedition: but these moments are transitory, and if their physical wants are gratified, the attention of the lower orders will, ere long, be again absorbed in their individual pur-

suits.* Nor is the evil without its antidote, even in such peculiar circumstances. If the turbulence of the lower orders is augmented by the spread of information, the vigour, the energy, and the power of the higher is augmented in a much greater proportion. Nowhere is sedition so little to be apprehended as in free and enlightened states. While the privileged ranks in France, where ignorance universally prevailed at the breaking out of the Revolution, fled before its terrors, and abandoned their country to the ravages of a small and atrocious faction, the middling classes in England, among whom information was universally diffused, united, on a similar crisis, with their superiors in the defence of order, and presented a compact front, impenetrable alike to foreign enemies and domestic treason.

Lastly, although the taste to enjoy, and the capacity to understand, *scientific* information may be limited to a small portion of the people, the desire for RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION is universal, and so powerful in its attractions as to rival, and often subdue, even in a large proportion of mankind, the enjoyments of sense. Whatever may be thought as to the practicability of making those who are doomed to a life of incessant labour abandon the solace of an exhausted frame, for the sober enjoyments of study, experience proves, that the interest of religious information is capable of affecting the most degraded classes, and awakening a sense of moral duty even in the humblest stations. In the poorest cottages of Scotland, in the solitude of the Highland valleys, and in the gloom of the Lanarkshire mines, the Bible is almost always to be

* Compare Britain in 1819 and 1824; or in 1832 and 1836.

found, and the poor inhabitant, to whom the chief enjoyments of existence are unknown, finds, in the promises of religion, enough to gild his unambitious life. The Divine precept, which commanded the fathers of Christianity to preach the Gospel to the poor, has found its counterpart in the human heart; and in every people, and in every climate, the desire for religious instruction is found to be one of the strongest and most universal feelings of our nature. It is because education extends the means of gratifying this universal wish, that it becomes so important an element in the social system: borne on the wings of religion, it spreads as far as the welfare of the soul can interest the human species. In vain did the genius of antiquity seek to spread information through an extended class in society; in vain will the delusion of modern times endeavour to separate useful knowledge from religious precept: the cravings of humanity will never be satisfied with such a neglect of the first desires of our nature, and if it continues, social evil will never fail to bring about its punishment. The knowledge of antiquity extended only to a limited class of the state, because it related to objects which, generally speaking, interest the higher orders alone: the education of modern times has spread through all classes of society, because it conveys instruction on the spiritual concerns of our nature, and relates to subjects interesting alike to the rich and the poor. In the diffusion of general information, therefore, in modern times, we discern another blessing communicated to mankind by the introduction of Christianity, and in its adaptation to the interests of society, and the developement of the limitations to population in its advanced stages, another proof of its Divine origin.

26961

Notwithstanding the superiority of his reason, man is nearly as much governed in his most essential particulars by the effects of instinct as the lower animals. All the essential interests of our being, whether in the individual or in society, are provided for by the inherent principles which prompt the individual to a certain conduct, without his being aware of the ultimate consequences of his actions. The developement of the limitations to population affords a striking example of this truth. Any attempt to coerce the multiplication of mankind by considerations drawn from the ultimate danger to be apprehended from a redundancy in the numbers of the species, or by the authority of the magistrate, would be utterly ineffectual. But that momentous change, which neither the wisdom, nor the power of man could effect, is silently brought about by the hand of Nature. The agents she employs are the successive desires and habits which spring up in the human mind with the revolution of time: the moving power is the efforts of individuals for their own advancement. Thus the interest of every member of society is inseparably connected with that of the community to which he belongs, and while he is actuated only by a desire to promote his own advantage, while he thinks of nothing but his own gratification, he is led by an invisible hand to do that which is most consonant to the condition of his race around him, and best adapted to secure its welfare in future times.

II. The next circumstance which leads to the limitation of the principle of increase, is the extension of *artificial wants* among the people.

As the principle of population is an instinctive de-

sire, which operates before reason is developed, or foresight has commenced, so it is by the growth of desires *inconsistent* with its early gratification that its impulse can alone be restrained. These counteracting desires are neither felt nor required in the first stages of society. They become indispensable to the welfare of the species, however, as its numbers extend, and they are developed accordingly by the same causes which call for their operation.

The division of labour, and the separation of employments, is the first circumstance which opens the germ of those acquired wants which afterwards possess such an unlimited sway over the human mind. The division of occupations enables the labourer in every department to raise a greater quantity of produce than he could have done when his attention was distracted by a variety of pursuits. He finds that the fruits of his labour *exceed* his annual consumption, and a little *stock* thus accumulates on his hands, available either to present enjoyment or future ambition. The labours of his neighbours in the mechanical or useful arts offer an agreeable subject of exchange for his surplus produce, and the interest of both is promoted by making the transfer. The acquisition of one comfort, or the indulgence of one gratification, not only renders its enjoyment necessary, but excites the desire for another. No sooner is this additional comfort attained and become habitual, than a new object of desire begins to be felt. To the succession of such objects there is no end. From the time that mankind first pass the boundary of actual necessity, and begin to feel the force of acquired wants, they have entered on a field to which imagination itself can

affix no limits. The highest objects of luxury in one age become comforts to the one which succeeds it, and are considered as absolute necessaries in the lapse of a few generations. The houses which are now inhabited by the lowest of the populace were the abodes of rank and opulence three centuries ago; the floors strewed with rushes, which were the mark of dignity under the Plantagenet princes, would now be rejected even by the inmates of workhouses; and the vegetables which were known only to the court of Queen Elizabeth are now to be seen in the garden of every English labourer.*

Each succeeding generation is bred up in the habits of indulgence to which the preceding one only attained by the result of many years of successful exertion. The parent who has raised himself from the middling to the higher ranks of life, or from the lower to the middling by a laborious industry, communicates to his children the habits and the wants to which he latterly succeeded. The gratifications which were considered as the highest objects of ambition, or the last step of luxury during the best years of his life, are regarded as mere necessaries by his posterity. To descend to the mode of life to which he cheerfully submitted for so long a period, would be to them an insupportable degradation. They in their turn fix their affections upon still higher gratifications, which are seen and envied from the elevated ground from which they commence their career; and if they are fortunate enough to attain these objects of ambi-

* Sallad was brought from Flanders for Queen Elizabeth's table, and potatoes were considered as valuable as pine-apples; watches and silk stockings were the luxury of the Court alone.—Hume's England, v, 422, Appendix, iii.

tion, they find other desires constantly springing up, and long after still farther gratifications, as far removed from their reach, as those which first excited their youthful imagination. The incessant desire of every succeeding generation becomes to preserve the advantages which their predecessors had gained, and to raise itself above the level to which it was destined by its birth; and a fall from those advantages is felt as the severest penalty of imprudence or guilt.

As no boundary can be affixed to the extension of human comfort, or the increase of human convenience, so there is no limit to the descent of these acquired advantages, through the innumerable ranks of society. In this respect, the change which takes place in the progress of opulence, in the manners of the great, has a most important effect on the habits of the whole body of the people. In feudal or barbarous ages, when the splendour of the nobility is displayed only in the multitude of their retainers, the strength of their castles, or the rude hospitality by which they are distinguished, no attempt at emulation can take place among their inferiors. The line which separates the privileged orders from the labouring classes is at once perceived to be impassable. The peasants in the country, or the burghers in the towns, have neither the means nor the inclination to imitate their superiors. Any such attempt would only expose them to the violence of their landlords, or the contempt of their neighbours. In such a state of society, accordingly, the habits of the lower orders of necessity remain stationary. During the prevalence of the feudal system in Europe, the manners of the labouring classes underwent hardly any alteration; and in

the east, where aristocratic violence has subsisted from the earliest ages, their habits and mode of life differ in no respect from what they were in the days of Cyrus or Alexander.

It is difficult to estimate, therefore, the importance of that change in society which, by spreading habits of refined enjoyment among the landed proprietors, not only prevents their wealth from being absorbed in the maintenance of military power, and consequently employed only in achieving deeds of violence, but turns it into a channel, where it at once encourages the industry of their inferiors, and furnishes an example of comfort which is not beyond their reach. Every addition which is made to the luxuries of the great becomes in the end an addition of comfort to the poor. When the revenue of a princely estate, instead of being employed in the maintenance of idle retainers, as in the days of feudal anarchy, is spent in the gratification of acquired desires, or in the erection of splendid edifices, the nobleman has descended into an arena, where he is liable to be rivalled, if not outdone, by the labouring classes of society. The wealth of the merchant or the manufacturer may shortly eclipse the splendours even of hereditary greatness, and the embarrassed descendant of the greatest families may be glad to receive the pecuniary support, or even court the alliance, of those who are sprung from the tenants who tilled their lands. The effects of this emulation are not confined to the richest and most opulent of the industrious classes. Their example operates with no less force upon the class immediately beneath themselves, who are not only stimulated to exertion by the prospect of successful industry, but

seized with the desire of enjoying the comforts which they perceive coming within their reach. The effect of this descent of artificial wants through the different ranks of society is universal. Every class forms its habits upon that immediately above itself, and speedily adopts any change which appears prevalent among its superiors, until the connection becomes unbroken, and the addition of a link to the chain in the hands of the prince raises it perceptibly in those of the peasant.

The extension of artificial wants among the inhabitants of towns is of course more immediate than what takes place in the country, in consequence of the close proximity of the higher and the lower orders, and the rapid progress of improvements, where luxury, invention, talent, and opulence are brought together. It is by the influence of the landed proprietors, and the effect of their example, that it is alone possible to spread these desires among the peasantry of the country. And it is here that the important effects both of the division of landed property among a great variety of possessors, and of the residence of such proprietors among their tenantry, become most conspicuous. Where great districts of country, as in Spain and Scotland, are engrossed by one proprietor, the influence of his example upon the inhabitants of his estate can hardly be felt. Whether he resides on his property or in the metropolis, which in all probability will attract him to its walls, he is equally unknown to the great body of his tenantry. Unless circumstances, as in the last of these countries, are favourable to the formation of an opulent class of tenantry, the people on such great estates have no means of becom-

ing acquainted with the conveniences or comforts of life. The growth of artificial wants is prevented by the absence of any examples to show their advantage, or excite the desire of possessing them. It is by the establishment of a numerous and *resident* body of landed proprietors that the great evil is prevented of the labouring classes sinking into degradation, and remaining contented with the support of animal life, while their superiors are advancing in the refinements of opulence. When the land is divided among a great number of proprietors of different degrees of fortune, but all residing among their people, each mansion-house becomes the centre of a little circle, the individuals of which, from perceiving the advantages of artificial comfort, become possessed by the desire of enjoying it, and gradually adopt such improvements as appear within their reach. It is from these fountains that the stream of artificial wants is spread over the country, and with them the invaluable habits and desires to which they give rise.

If every thing else were wanting, this consideration would alone be sufficient to refute the paradox, recently and confidently advanced by a distinguished writer,* that Ireland is not materially injured by the non-residence of her landed proprietors. It may no doubt be true that the encouragement to the labour of the world is as great whether the produce of individual industry is consumed at the metropolis of the empire, or dissipated in rustic profusion at the mansion of his landlord; but the effects are very different upon the habits which that cultivator acquires in return. It is not merely by the absolute amount of the price

* Mr M'Culloch.

paid for the produce of distant countries that the moral effect upon the mind of the cultivator is to be measured; much depends also upon the example which is placed before his eyes of this *employment of wealth*, and upon the habits of life which he is led to form from the observation of that pursued by his superiors. If he never sees his landlord, and lives constantly among people as poor as himself, he never can acquire artificial wants, or be induced to deviate from the rude and indigent habits of his forefathers. The Polish cultivators may be encouraged as much as the English by the consumption of London; but who can doubt that the habits of the latter are materially affected by the residence of their landlords among themselves, and that to their example, continued for so many centuries, is chiefly to be ascribed the high standard of comfort which forms at once the characteristic and the protection of the English peasantry. There is no greater evil to the lower orders of a country than to have the wealth which is the fruit of their labour spent at a distance from themselves, because in that case they have no opportunity of acquiring either the habits of industry, or the ideas of comfort which are essential to their well-being, and population is furnished with the means of increase, while no scope for the developement of its limitations is afforded.

This great and important change which ensues, in the progress of society, in the habits and desires of all its members, is the principal counterpoise which Nature has provided to the principle of population. The indulgence of artificial wants is incompatible with a rapid increase of the human species. If the labourer finds himself burdened early in life with a

wife and children, he must forego many enjoyments, which otherwise would be within his reach. When habit has rendered these enjoyments essential to his comfort, the want of them is felt as an excessive deprivation. The actual pangs of indigence are not so severely felt in savage life, as the want of artificial enjoyments by those who have been accustomed to the luxuries of civilized society. To descend to the habits of the lower orders, after having been accustomed to those of a superior class, is considered as the greatest misfortune which can befal an individual. It is the great object of life, in all ranks, to avoid this calamity: to rise to the enjoyments of a higher sphere, not sink to the difficulties of an inferior. The slightest observation of human affairs is sufficient to demonstrate, even to the most unthinking, that an imprudent marriage is the most effectual method of incurring the evils, and preventing the acquisition of these advantages. The melancholy instances of loss of station, and deprivation of enjoyment in consequence of such a thoughtless step in the outset of life, which must come under every one's observation, are sufficient to force the perception of this truth even on the most inconsiderate. Strong as the principle of population is, experience proves that these prudential considerations, when suffered to develope themselves, are still stronger, and are perfectly sufficient to restrain the rate of human increase, according to the circumstances in which the species is placed.

To be convinced of the truth of this observation it is only necessary to consider the situation of the higher classes of society, and the principles which determine the increase of their numbers. That they are placed

above the level of actual want, and that no imprudence in contracting early marriages could reduce them to a situation where they might want the necessaries of life, is in general sufficiently evident. Yet population advances with exceedingly slow steps among these classes; and so far from sending forth multitudes to compete with the inferior orders in their departments, they are unable to maintain their own numbers, and require continual accessions from the middling classes of society. The common observation, that the nobility of every country are on the decline, and would speedily become extinct, if not recruited by new creations from the sovereign, shows how universally the truth of this observation has been experienced. Marriages in that rank are contracted with extreme circumspection, and seldom before one of the parties at least has attained the middle of life. The universal complaint of the excessive difficulty of getting young women established in life in the higher ranks of society, proves how generally the preventive check prevails in those elevated spheres. In no class of society is the rate of increase so slow as in that which is farthest removed from actual want. Whatever may be the rapidity with which population is advancing in some parts of the British empire, in the class which composes the Houses of Peers and Commons, it is stationary, if not declining.

The same principle influences the rate of increase in the middling ranks of society. The desire of rising in the world, and extending the sphere of their enjoyments, is equally felt in that station of life. So strongly in consequence does the principle of moral restraint operate, that their numbers, as well as those of their superiors, increase very slowly or remain stationary:

and it is from the continual influx of persons from an inferior class in society that the growth of that important body is secured. Every person must have perceived the truth of this in his own observation. It is the continual pressure *from below* which occasions the excessive competition in every profession and business of life. Ask the physician, the lawyer, the tradesman, or the merchant, to what cause the difficulty which they experience in making their way in the world is to be ascribed, and they will all answer that it is the influx of persons into their professions from an *inferior rank* which creates the competition. If their numbers were to be recruited only from the descendants of their *own class* in society, comparatively little difficulty would be experienced. It is the constant wish of such classes, by positive or prohibitory regulations, to secure themselves from the effects of a competition which is felt to be so distressing. A vain attempt, to expect by human institutions to prevent the operation of the most important law which Nature has provided for the regulation of the numbers of mankind!

It is a most important and luminous fact on the subject of population, that in every well-regulated society the rate of increase is slowest in the most opulent classes; barely perceptible in the middling ranks; and rapid only in those situations where comfort and the influence of artificial wants are unknown. By a singular anomaly, the rapidity of increase is in the inverse ratio of the means which are afforded of maintaining a family in comfort and independence: it is greatest when these means are the least, and least when they are the greatest.

If, therefore, it were possible to communicate to the

labouring classes the habits and views of their superiors, population would be always and effectually restrained within the limits which the state of society requires. The efforts of every individual for his own advancement, would lead him to adopt the course called for, by the means which existed of rearing a family. Particular families, no doubt, might be ruined by imprudence or misfortune; but the people upon the whole would be in comfortable circumstances. The course prescribed to individuals by their own interest would restrain the rate of increase within the actual demand for labour: and the numbers of the people, how great soever, would always be somewhat less than could be maintained in comfort.

It is impossible to give a whole people the habits of prudence and the artificial wants of the higher ranks; but it is possible to make them descend so far as to influence the conduct of the majority of their members, and decidedly to regulate the progress of population. The slightest observation of mankind in different parts of the world is sufficient to demonstrate this. Holland and Flanders have long been remarkable for the density of their population, which exceeds that of any other part of Europe; yet nowhere does more comfort or opulence prevail among the people. The small cantons of Switzerland, and the Pays de Vaud, are more thickly peopled than any part of the known world; yet nowhere is the condition of the peasantry so comfortable, or moral restraint so universally diffused through the lower orders.* Notwithstanding the severe vicissitudes in the employment of the ma-

* See below, Chapter VII., where the condition of the people in these countries is fully considered.

nufacturing classes which recent events have produced in England, the only redundance which is there felt arises from the inundation of the Irish poor, and if they could be removed, the condition of the people in all parts of the island would be comparatively comfortable. The investigations of the Emigrant Committee, in 1827, of the House of Commons, demonstrate that no tendency to over increase exists among the *native* poor of this country; and while they have recommended the adoption of emigration on a large scale, as the only means of relieving the surplus population of Ireland, where the wages of labour have been depressed to the lowest point consistent with the preservation of life; they have stated, as the result of their inquiries, that *no similar measure* is called for in Scotland, where the funds for the maintenance of labour are so much more abundant.*

These examples demonstrate how widely we should err if we were to conclude that population uniformly advances with the extension of the means of subsistence, and that like water it necessarily fills up rapidly and certainly every vacuum or outlet which is presented. If men were governed by no desire but that of indulging their passions, or rearing a family, and restrained from doing so by nothing but the pressure of absolute want, that would no doubt be the case: and the world exhibits too many examples of nations in a degraded state where such laws seem to govern their increase. But with the establishment of civilized society, and the diffusion of wealth among the middling ranks, other propensities arise which counteract the prevailing tendency to early marriages, and

* Report on Emigration, 1827.

acquire at length an entire ascendency over all ranks of the people. When this change has taken place, the progress of population is no longer governed solely by the means of subsistence; but is affected also by the standard of comfort which is established among the people, and often advances slowly, while the funds for the maintenance of labour are rapidly accumulating.

The more generally that habits of comfort and the desire of artificial enjoyments can be diffused among the people, the greater is the scope afforded to the limitations to the principle of increase, and the more secure is the barrier rendered against a redundant population. If all ranks of society could be brought to feel the influence of these wants, the danger of an undue increase in the numbers of mankind would be *entirely removed.* The degree in which any country can approximate to that desirable situation, is just in proportion to the extension of their desires. Whatever tends to spread a taste for artificial enjoyments among the labouring classes, and to establish a scale of comfort descending by imperceptible gradations from the highest to the lowest ranks, increases the influence of the limitations to population.

These considerations demonstrate how extremely unfounded the popular complaints, so common in every age and country, of the increase of luxury in reality are; and what an important element in the government of society would be withdrawn, if the simple manners of the good old times, which are so often held up to our imitation, were to be adopted. The well known fact, that artificial gratifications uniformly increase with the progress of wealth, and that all the efforts of legislation are utterly ineffectual to restrain them, might alone

be sufficient to convince every thinking mind, that they are calculated to answer some important purpose in the system of nature, which those who are so desirous to coerce it have not perceived. One of these purposes, undoubtedly, is the diffusion of artificial wants among the people. Where the habits or enjoyments of the rich differ in no great degree from those of the poor, ideas of comfort can never be generally diffused, because men always endeavour to imitate the manners of their superiors, and if the great are slovenly the poor will be beggars. The more that the rich advance in the refinements of luxury, the more do the poor advance in habits of comfort; for luxury can never descend far in society, and before it reaches the labouring classes, it is stript of all its dangerous qualities. The humane may exclaim against the selfishness of the affluent in consuming, in the ornament of a single room, what would maintain the poor of a whole parish; but the ultimate effect of the dissipation of wealth in this respect is not less beneficial to the society than its distribution. It descends among innumerable artisans and manufacturers, each of whom acquires from such a lavish expenditure both the means of bettering his own condition, and the desire to improve his own comforts: the standard of competence is raised by the diffusion of the means of gratifying increasing enjoyments which are afforded: and from the prodigality which ruins the fortune of a single family, there often spring habits among their inferiors, which secure the well-being of thousands of mankind.

It may be added, that the extension of comfort among the poor is eminently beneficial to their moral character. The severe and incessant toil which is indis-

pensable to the welfare of the labouring poor in civilized society, can be sustained only by the prospect of enjoyment from its fruits. It will universally be found, that ignorance of artificial wants among the working classes is accompanied by excessive indolence; and that the natural repugnance of mankind to labour can be overcome only by a strong feeling of the enjoyment to be obtained from submitting to it. It is related by Dr Franklin, that the people in his parish were exceedingly averse to labour till some new settlers made their appearance at church with handsomer dresses than any that had hitherto been seen, and from that moment no difficulty was experienced in getting them to submit to exertion.*

Intoxication is the greatest evil which affects the labouring poor in cold countries. The desire for spirituous liquors is felt by the rudest as well as the most civilized inhabitant of such latitudes; and the baneful effects of indulging in their use are experienced alike by the savage and the citizen. In the former state it brutalizes the species, and frequently destroys the population of whole tribes; in the latter it degrades the mind, and is the source to which half the distress and nearly all the crime of civilized life may be traced. It is in vain to oppose to this prevailing desire, considerations exclusively drawn from religion or reason: these arguments affect only the thoughtful and industrious, and that class is not the one which principally falls a prey to these disorders. If we would effectually resist this dreadful evil among the mass of mankind, we must oppose to the influence of this passion other desires as universal as the race of men, and as powerful as the stimulus which it af-

* Franklin's Works, iii. 247.

fords. The influence of artificial wants will never probably eradicate the taste for this ruinous indulgence among the labouring poor; but, by increasing the comforts and rivetting the habits which must be abandoned for its gratification, they tend both to augment the horror at the consequences of such a vice, and to provide other enjoyments to diminish its attractions. Generally it will be found, accordingly, that the people who are most addicted to intemperance are those to whom it constitutes the sole enjoyment of life; and that, in proportion as mankind rise above that lowest stage of existence into a sphere where other comforts are habitual, its prevalence sensibly declines. The marked diminution in the wine drank by the higher classes in Great Britain during the last half century, when luxury in other respects has made such rapid progress among them, affords the clearest proof of this observation.

The constant complaints which are made of the extent to which the middling and lower orders in this country imitate the customs and affect the enjoyments of their superiors, prove how generally artificial wants are spreading among the people. Masters everywhere complain that their servants dress as well as themselves: mistresses that the finery of their maids is totally unsuitable to their station: landlords that their tenants lead a life and indulge in amusements inconsistent with their circumstances. In former times sumptuary laws were often made to fix the limits which were to be prescribed to every class of society, in their dress, their living, and their establishment; and in many countries of the east such laws have become permanent customs. Fortunately in Europe no such restriction could ever be established;

and the prevalence of these habits among the middling and lower orders affords the best security against the misery of a redundant population. It will be a fortunate day for Ireland when such complaints begin to be made by her landed proprietors.

It is only, however, when habits of comfort descend through all ranks, that their beneficial effects upon the progress of population develope themselves. When luxury is confined to the higher orders, while the lower are degraded and oppressed, so far from being beneficial it becomes destructive to society. It corrupts the rich without assisting the poor; and increases rather than diminishes the tendency to over increase in population, by creating a great expenditure, and consequently a great demand for labour, without awakening any desires among the labouring classes to restrain its increase. The gulf which separates the rich from the poor is felt to be impassable, when the lower orders are debarred from rising into the class or acquiring the rank of their superiors. It is the establishment of a numerous and wealthy *middle class*, approaching on the one side to the splendour of the great, and bordering on the other upon the indigence of the poor, which preserves unbroken the chain of society, and renders the progress of wealth, fatal to the prosperity of despotic states, instrumental only in increasing the industry, and improving the habits of those which are free. It is not at Moscow or Warsaw, where vast fortunes are wrung from the labour of an enslaved peasantry, and the palace of the prince is surrounded by the hovels of the poor, that the salutary effects of luxury are to be seen: but in England, where "no sullen line of demarcation separates the higher and the lower rank,

but all is one blended whole, melting by insensible gradations from the bright dwellings of the great, which bask in the sunshine of rank and opulence, to the obscure abode of the cottager, who toils in the shade of humble life."*

III. It is not, however, by the diffusion of artificial wants alone, and the consequent elevation of the standard of comfort among the people, that the principle of population is restrained in the later stages of society. Coëval with the formation of the social union, there arise other principles in the human mind tending to the same end, and equally essential to the well-being of society in other respects.

The desire of accumulating property has been already noticed, as one of the most remarkable peculiarities by which the situation of man is distinguished from that of the lower animals. From this desire, there springs another of the most powerful limitations to the principle of increase.

How little soever the desire of possessing property may be felt in the infancy of the species, it acquires, in the progress of society, a prodigious influence over the destinies of mankind. It cannot be felt in early times, because the accumulation of wealth, in a permanent form, is then impossible. Where riches consist, as in the shepherd or early agricultural state, only in the number of the herds, or the ample store of the barns, by which the dwelling of the rude inhabitant is surrounded, it is impracticable to hoard up property beyond a certain limit. No motive for its augmentation can exist, when the purposes to which capital can be applied are unknown. The only use

* Sheridan, Speeches, i. 271.

of wealth in such a form is to minister to human subsistence: it decays and perishes if not speedily applied to that purpose. The growth of wealth, therefore, in such circumstances, can lead only to the multiplication of mankind.

But when *permanent* articles of comfort become known, the surplus produce of labour gradually receives, in part, at least, a different destination. The convenience of furniture, the comfort of dress, the improvements of dwellings, are felt to be lasting advantages, which not only minister to the gratification of their possessor during the whole of life, but may be transmitted unimpaired to his descendants. With the *power* of storing up the produce of labour in a permanent form, there arises the *desire* of adding to its amount; and thus a large part of the produce of industry is withdrawn from immediate consumption, and accumulated in a form where it ceases to give so direct an impulse to the increase of the species.

The introduction of money, by affording an easy mode of storing up property in a form where it is not susceptible of decay, and which is capable of immediate conversion to the purposes of life, increases the direction of wealth into this lasting form. The possession of property of this description is soon perceived to be at once the surest safeguard against many of the evils of life, and the only effectual key to its physical gratifications. The accumulation of wealth becomes, in process of time, a passion of itself, and life is spent in the continued pursuit of riches, which are applied to no other purpose than that of being transmitted by death to a successor. However extraordinary it may appear, that the enjoyment of existence should,

in this manner, be postponed till it can no longer be felt, the effects of this disposition upon the habits of society are in the highest degree important.

The accumulation of capital is the most powerful instrument in the hands of Nature for changing the habits and affecting the destinies of mankind. If the wealth which is produced by the labour of successive generations were consumed by the individuals who created it, the occupations of men would remain for ever the same. The imperious necessity of providing for the support of life, or for its rudest convenience, would chain them in every age to the same employments. If no wealth were transmitted from generation to generation, the habits of the last must have remained the same as the first;—where men are exposed to the same necessities, their mode of life hardly ever undergoes any alteration.

It is this universal and seemingly extraordinary desire, therefore, to transmit property to posterity, which lays the foundation of all the changes which ensue in the progress of society. It is this which enables the descendant of the industrious and the fortunate to command enjoyments, and indulge in habits unattainable by the great body of the people: to engage in works and commence undertakings altogether beyond their reach, and to assume the government of mankind by possessing the means of directing their operations.

The effects of this change in the relative situation of the species, from the growth and transmission of capital, have been frequently explained. But its effect in developing the limitations to the principle of

population, though equally important, have not met with the same attention.

The continual effort of a large proportion of the people in every successive generation to add to their capital, and better their condition in life, comes in the progress of time to produce a material influence upon the increase of mankind. Every individual, who, by a life of successful exertion, is enabled to transmit property to any amount to his posterity, has done something to alter the habits of his country. The views of life, the habits, the enjoyments of his successor, are materially different from those which he himself was at first accustomed to, and which still continue in the class in which he was originally born. The disregard of the future, the recklessness, the imprudence of the labouring classes, appear extraordinary to those who have elevated themselves above their sphere. These habits are transmitted to their children, and the prudence and foresight which originally raised an individual from an humble station come to regulate the habits of innumerable descendants. Many of these successors without doubt are precipitated by imprudence or misfortune into the class from which their forefathers sprung; but the greater number succeed in maintaining a part at least of the advantages which have been acquired for them; and some rise to still higher stations, and become the stock from which a more elevated family dates its origin.

The more that individuals succeed in accumulating wealth, which is transmitted to their descendants, the greater is the change which is thus effected in the habits of future generations. From the great fortunes accumulated by industry, or won by the

sword in former times, the dignified families of the realm have successively sprung. From the frugal habits and unnoticed exertions of an inferior class have arisen the great and opulent middling class of society. From the humble labours of the peasantry have arisen the numerous and wealthy body of yeomanry, allied to their inferiors by their habits of industry, and bound to their superiors by their interest and their ambition. The incessant exertions made by every rank to maintain and increase the wealth which they have acquired, extends to an incalculable degree the change which is gradually effected in the habits of the people. The magnitude and wealth of the middling class of society constitute the great distinction between England and the other states of Europe. In the celebrated question of the Emperor Alexander in London, "Where are the people?" we may discern the extent to which the habits of the labouring classes have been affected by the growth and opulence of that body.

Even the dissipation by extravagance of the wealth which has been won by industry, does not materially weaken its effect upon the habits of society; it only alters the channel in which those effects are to be discerned. A few years may dissipate the fortune which the labours of successive generations have produced, but, however severe the effects of imprudence may be on individuals, the follies of men are subservient to the purposes of nature. The wealth which is thus flung abroad with so careless a hand is not lost to society: it descends to the artisans and the manufacturers who have ministered to the extravagance of their prodigal superiors, and ul-

timately finds its way into a class where it is treasured up with pious care, and becomes the beginning of a career of prosperity and opulence to an extended circle.

How prodigal soever the habits of the higher orders may be, wealth always finds a class, in its descent through the different gradations of society, where this effect takes place. It is in countries where the lower orders are oppressed by the higher, and their gains wrung from them by the hand of power, that luxury in the great co-exists with misery among the poor, and the increase of men is followed by no restraint on their multiplication. When the labouring classes are secured in the enjoyment of the fruits of their labours, the diffusion of wealth by one rank only leads to its accumulation by another; and the progress of artificial wants augments the growth of capital, by extending the number of those who are influenced by the desire to obtain them.

The desire of accumulating capital restrains the principle of population, by spreading habits of frugality among the middling and lower orders. The indulgence of luxury produces the same effect, by giving them a taste for artificial wants and the elegancies of life. The accumulation and dissipation of wealth are alike conducive to the formation of habits inconsistent with a redundant population where all classes enjoy the same advantages: it is the oppression of the one for the supposed benefit of the other that prevents these effects.

The desire of amassing property, in a permanent form, appears very early in the progress of society, and affects the principle of population before wealth has made any considerable progress, and in situations where the influence of artificial wants is in

a great measure unknown. The peasantry of Lapland, Sweden, and Finland, are distinguished by the number of articles of substantial comfort which are to be found in their dwellings; costly articles of furniture and golden ornaments descend from one generation to another; and in no part of the world is moral restraint more prevalent, or population more effectually restrained within the limits which the circumstances of society require. No traveller can enter a Swiss cottage, especially in the Cantons of Zurich and Berne, and Underwalden, without being struck with the ease and comfort which universally prevail: the dwellings of their inmates, their dress, their furniture, bespeak an extraordinary degree of opulence in the peasantry, and nowhere are frugal habits more prevalent, or population less disposed to become redundant.* In Albania, the peasantry, notwithstanding the oppression to which they are subjected, and the distress which they often experience, preserve with pious care the splendid articles of dress or ornament which have been bought with the savings of former generations; and no extremity of distress will induce the young women to part with the jewels which they have received from their parents, as their provision in life. The parsimonious habits and frugal disposition of the Dutch and Flemish are universally known, and in no part of the world has commercial wealth longer been established or a great and dense population shown less tendency to become *redundant.* Scotland has long enjoyed the benefit of establishments which have secured to her people the blessings which the savings banks have recently begun to confer on England, and such has been their effect in producing a spirit of

* Personal Observation.

frugality among the labouring classes, that it was proved in the Committee of the House of Commons, that out of L. 20,000,000 which was deposited in the Scotch banks, by far the greatest proportion was in sums under L. 50 Sterling.* Perhaps there never was a more fortunate circumstance for this part of the island than the excitation of that strong national spirit which led to the abandonment of government of the proposed restrictions on Scotch notes: a measure which, by preventing the payment of interest on such deposits, threatened to extinguish these little germs of public prosperity, and destroy the habits of frugality to which her unexampled progress during the last sixty years has been owing. By far the greatest part of the British three per cents. has long been composed of small sums, which form a source of revenue to a vast number of the middling ranks in England;† and it may

* Report on Scotch Banks, 1826.

† Table of the holders of property in the British funds in 1837.—Porter's Parliamentary Tables for 1837, p. 5.

Dividend.			
Not exceeding	L. 5,	28,122 / 59,090	— 87,212
Do.	L. 10,	14,373 / 30,647	— 45,020
Do.	L. 50,	32,890 / 65,869	— 98,759
Do.	L. 100,	8,526 / 17,362	— 25,888
Do.	L. 200,	4,761 / 10,049	— 14,810
Do.	L. 300,	1,419 / 3,074	— 4,493
Do.	L. 500,	830 / 1,932	— 2,762
Do.	L. 1000,	420 / 939	— 1,359
Do.	L. 2000,	131 / 271	— 402
Exceeding	L. 2000,	68 / 108	— 176
			280,881

It may safely be affirmed that this Savings Bank, the greatest ever

well be doubted whether the existence of a secure place of deposit for the savings of the nation, during the last century, has not been the means of creating more wealth, than all her foreign wars have destroyed, and of forming habits among the industrious classes more than sufficient to counterbalance all the disadvantages of the public debt.

IV. It is not merely by the growth of artificial wants, however, and the desire of accumulating property for the use of future generations, that the human race is governed by different principles, from the lower animals. The *distinction of ranks* constitutes another important peculiarity of the species; and from this source also a powerful limitation to the principle of population takes its rise.

The subjection of the great body of mankind to the government of a few, and the hereditary descent of power, seem to be almost coëval with the birth of mankind. In the rudest ages, and the most uncivilized parts of the world, the difference of ranks, and the transmission of influence in particular families are to be found. But no restrictions on the principle of increase arise from these distinctions. On the contrary, the subjection of the great body of the people either to the oppression of a single despot, or the exactions of an independant aristocracy, by degrading the habits of mankind, is the surest means of rendering that principle unlimited in its operation.

But with the growth of civil liberty and the esta-

possessed by any nation, is of such incalculable benefit, both in a social and political point of view, that its blessings have been cheaply purchased by all the blood and treasure expended in the Revolutionary war.

blishment of a regular government, other desires spring up in the human mind, which ultimately come to exercise a powerful influence on the multiplication of the species. Security of property speedily produces its accumulation, while the protection of government secures its transmission to future generations. The rise of a numerous and opulent aristocracy, which, though originally sprung not from military violence, or regal favour, is supported by the exertions of industry and habits of frugality, produces an important change on the desires of mankind. The most active and enterprising minds are influenced by the desire of rising in society: and every instance in which such exertions are crowned with success, becomes the means of spreading the ambition of attaining such distinction over a more extended circle. By degrees this ambition spreads into the middling ranks of society: from thence it extends into the lower, until all ranks are actuated by an incessant desire of rising in the world, and this passion becomes the governing principle of mankind.

It has been observed by Mr Smith, that the desire of *bettering one's condition* is so strongly imprinted in the human breast, that with a tolerable administration of justice, and the ordinary security of property, it is quite sufficient to ensure the prosperity of mankind. The slightest observation of the principles which actuate the different ranks of society in every well regulated state must be sufficient to demonstrate that this remark is well founded. To maintain their own place in society, to achieve its elevation, and to avoid the danger of its degradation, is the great object to which all men aspire. It incessantly occupies

their thoughts, and forms the secret spring by which almost every action of their lives are determined. To the industrious and orderly part of the community it speedily becomes a habit, and constitutes at once the object and the reward of a life of labour. Even the inconsiderate and reckless are governed by the same motives. It is the desire to become speedily rich that is the cause of almost all the crimes into which the better ranks of society are seduced; and it is the undue desire to obtain the consideration of a higher station than they enjoy in the world, that leads so many of the higher classes into habits of prodigality, which, for the gratification of a few years, ruin the prospects of a whole life.

The more numerous that the gradations of society become in the progress of opulence, the more generally does this principle operate upon the people. The more steps that are added to the ladder, the greater will be the multitude who will strive to ascend it. Few only may attain the highest stations; but if the lowest are within the reach of the great body of mankind, they will all endeavour to begin the ascent. It is the struggle to commence it which leads to the limitation of population among the labouring classes: the desire to rise higher which checks the increase of the more respectable ranks of society.

This prevailing passion for rising in the world limits the increase of population, not only by the effect which it produces in preventing early or imprudent marriages on the part of men, but equally by the ambition which it excites in the other sex. As the greater part of women are debarred, in the better ranks of society at least, from raising themselves by their own exertions,

they have no means of gratifying their ambition but by their marriage. There arises in consequence a strong and general desire in the other sex to raise themselves by their marriage to a rank *above* that in which they were born; and a corresponding horror for the danger, by an imprudent union, of falling into an inferior station. These feelings in civilized society become a powerful principle by which the conduct of women is governed; and in the higher ranks, they are quite sufficient to create a passion, where the object combines many of the advantages which are sought after in married life. It is a mistake to imagine in such cases that the object of women is merely mercenary, or that they deliberately sacrifice their inclinations from the desire of forming an advantageous connection. No such sacrifice is required of them by nature, and their conduct springs as much from a disinterested regard for their blood relations as gratification to themselves. The prevailing admiration of the other sex for men of *distinction* easily ripens into a passion, where such distinction appears within their reach; and attachment comes to be ultimately felt, where it never often would have arisen but for the gifts of fortune. To those who blame women for being influenced by such motives, it is sufficient to answer that this is the constitution of their nature; that were it not for such a disposition the greatest stimulus to human exertion would be awanting; and that it does not seem very reasonable for one sex to blame the other for being influenced by principles in one step in life, by which they themselves are actuated in all.

The universal complaints which are made in every age and rank of life, of the prevalence of this disposi-

tion in women, affords ample proof of the general operation of such principles. It is in the ballads of a people that the feelings which actuate the lower classes are to be found. Whoever has found a nation whose poetry or romance never spoke of the inability of true love to contend with the advantages of fortune and distinction, may boast of having discovered a people different from all the rest of the species.

These considerations point out the immense importance of permitting the lower orders to rise, by due exertion, to all the distinctions enjoyed by the higher, and the beneficial effects of that system of government, which, while it leaves every career open to the exertions of talent and industry, secures to every class the undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. Without the establishment of such freedom and protection, the strongest limitations to the principle of increase must lie dormant in the human breast; and no restraint to the multiplication of the species can exist under circumstances which imperiously call for their operation. It is from the *power* of rising in society that the *desire* of doing so can alone be developed; if the avenue to distinction is closed, no wish to obtain it can be felt. In proportion to the means of individual elevation which are extended to the great body of the people, will be the degree in which the preventive check will operate upon their increase. Before we expect men to contend with the instincts of their nature, we must give them some motives for resisting them, and permit the developement of some desire inconsistent with their gratification.

Towards the due operation of this important limitation on the principle of increase, it is indis-

pensable that society should contain numerous *gradations* in rank; and that every class should perpetually have before their eyes the means, by prudent conduct and vigorous exertion, of raising themselves, not to the highest ranks in the state, for that can affect only a few, but to those stations immediately above themselves, which are evidently within their reach. The more numerous that these gradations are, the lower that they descend in society, and the greater the facilities afforded to all classes to raise themselves by industry and good conduct, the wider is the sphere of the operation of this important limitation on the principle of increase. It is hard to say whether "the level flat of oriental despotism," as Gibbon felicitously styles it, or the high table-land of American republicanism, is most at variance with the action of this powerful agent on the fortunes of mankind. In the first case, rank or station in society is unattainable in the general case by good conduct or prudent regulation of life. Court favour, fortune, or address, constitute the sole springs of advancement. In the last, political power being equally vested from the outset of life in all classes, it is considered as no distinction, any more than the air which they breathe, or the water which they drink. The English Reform Bill, in a social point of view, has chiefly erred by severing political power, at least in boroughs, from the possession of property, by the fatal L. 10 *tenant* suffrage, which in all great towns has vested a preponderance of votes in persons worth little or nothing. The establishment of a *little aristocracy* of freeholders, each enjoying political power, as the fruit of industry and prudence in himself or his ancestors, is one of

the most important elements, not only in the political, but social institutions of society, and indispensable to the developement in this particular of the intended limitation on the principle of increase. And in this, as in all other instances, it will be found, that the means of establishing the due regulation of population is to be sought for in no other measures but those which are obviously prescribed by a due regard to the order, tranquillity, and stability of the state; and that the disturbing forces which break in upon this beautiful system, are those which the wisdom and experience of all ages has condemned as destructive, alike to the political grandeur of the state, and the real interests of all classes of society.

It is consoling to reflect, that the growth of these desires, destined to restrain the principle of increase, is secured by the same system which is essential to the well-being of the species in every other particular. It is the power of rising in society, and thereby permitting the talents of the great body of the people to bear upon the fortunes of the state, which constitutes the strength of free countries. It was this which animated the arts of Greece, and strengthened the arms of Rome: it was this, during the fever of the Revolution, which rendered the arms of France triumphant, and it is this which has now placed England at the head of civilisation throughout the world. The same regulated freedom which raises the human species to its highest pitch of elevation, unfolds the principles destined to regulate its increase; it at once affords the means to the greatest multiplication of the species, and furnishes the best security against its redundance. The state will never have to lament the indigence or

multiplication of its inhabitants, which respects the rights, and fosters the interests of all classes of the citizens.

We do not require to search the historians of former times for ample proof of these observations: the British empire furnishes the most striking examples of the effect of the desire of individual elevation in modifying the principle of population. Notwithstanding the rapid increase of its inhabitants during the last thirty years, in consequence of the profuse expenditure of the war, and the unexampled increase of its manufacturing industry, Great Britain has never felt the evils of a redundant population from the numbers of its own people. Great as its population is, it is still within the limits which can be comfortably maintained. The distress which has existed during that period of unexampled vicissitude and change, has been almost entirely owing either to the fluctuations of trade, or the influx of Irish poor, who, in the first quarter of this century, besides doubling their own numbers, have added *a million* to the poor of the neighbouring island.* The Committee on Emigration in the House of Commons have reported, after the fullest investigation, that *no tendency* to

* Humboldt is the first author of note who has brought this extraordinary fact into notice. He observes that the difference between the population which should have existed from the register of births and deaths, and that actually shown by the returns in Great Britain, from 1801 to 1821, is a million of souls; and supposing with reason, that the number of deaths which, by inadvertence, may not have entered the registers, may be equal to that of those who have in like manner entered the world without notice, he concludes that this huge difference has almost entirely arisen from the influx of Irish poor during that period, being at the rate of 50,000 a-year; a number by no means beyond the bounds of probability.—See Humboldt, Nouvelle Espagne, iv. 372.

undue increase prevails among the inhabitants of this island,* where the freedom of the Government has developed all the limitations to population, at the same time that it has given the greatest encouragement to industry, and occasioned the most extraordinary augmentation of national opulence. On the other hand, in Ireland, where the demand for labour is so much more inconsiderable, where capital is, comparatively speaking, unknown, and the wealth of the island has almost deserted its own shores, the degradation of the labouring classes, and the misery of the country, by preventing the developement of any limitations to the principle of population, have been the means of creating an enormous multitude of indigent inhabitants, who not only thwart every attempt at the improvement of their own country, but overwhelm the industry of the whole empire.

V. Although without doubt the changes in the moral principles which regulate the increase of the human species are by far the most important elements in the consideration of this subject, yet they are by no means the only ones; and physical circumstances of great efficacy conspire with the moral ones to retard the advance of the human species in the later stages of society.

1. The first of these is the diminished number of offspring, which always, on an average of a great number of families, attends the contracting of marriages in middle life instead of early youth. That such a habit, if general, must sensibly affect the rate of human increase, from the number of persons of

* Parl. Rep., 1827, on the Labouring Poor.

both sexes who from it are made to die in celibacy, is self-evident; but it also acts in an important manner upon the fecundity of those who enter into the married state. This result, which *a priori* might have been expected, is entirely confirmed by the observations of the most celebrated statistical writers. M. Quetelet, whose researches on the Physical Laws of Human Increase, especially in Belgium, are so well known, has recorded his opinion, that the fecundity of marriages, other things being equal, is in proportion to the youth of the parents; and this difference becomes, if the ages are widely different, so great as to amount to *one-half.** The importance of this physical law of nature upon the increase of mankind is therefore very great; and it is probably owing to its continued and increasing operation, that the fact is owing, which has so often been observed, that the more elevated classes of society, so far from increasing rapidly, are seldom able to maintain their own numbers. It is the obvious tendency of old, and still more highly civilized and opulent societies, to extend first to the middling, and ultimately to the lower, those restraints, whether physical or moral, on the increase of mankind, which have always been found to be so efficacious in arresting the increase, or even occasioning the decline of the higher orders in the state.

2. The vast and constantly increasing surplus of agricultural produce which accumulates in every

* Average number of children born of a marriage where the parents are

Below 26, -	5.11
From 26 to 36,	4.43
Above 36,	2.84

Quetelet sur l'Homme et le Development de ses Facultés, i. 39.

country with the progress of society, and the increasing powers of production which agricultural skill have in every age communicated to human industry in the later stages of society, uniformly and invariably, in densely peopled and opulent communities, lead to the accumulation of mankind in great cities. In such situations, unless the prevalence of manufactures and the operation of the factory system have given a forced and unnatural encouragement to early marriages, the moral causes of restraint, from the progress of luxury, and spread of artificial wants among all classes, necessarily become extremely powerful. But even if it should be otherwise, and pernicious institutions should force on in such situations, in particular great towns, a vast increase of births, the unhealthiness incident to the situation of the children necessarily occasions such a mortality among them, as effectually prevents these births leading to any considerable addition to the numbers of mankind.

So powerful is the effect, so universal the operation of this check upon the increase of population in great cities, and especially those where manufactures to any considerable extent are established, that it has led an able and benevolent author, whose powerful mind has thrown so much light on this branch of the subject, Mr Sadler, to the belief that there is an universal law of nature in operation here, and that the fecundity of mankind is invariably in the inverse ratio of their density.* To this proposition, pushed as Mr Sadler has extended it to the human race in general, the example of the British Islands at this time, where an amount of human beings, probably unparalleled over

* Sadler on Population, ii. 352, 369.

so wide an extent of surface, in any other age or country, is attended with a rapidity in the growth of population equally unexampled, and almost rivalling, as has been already shown,* the far-famed rapidity of Transatlantic increase, appears to afford a decisive refutation. But, considered not as a general physical law of universal operation and invincible force, but as a restraint upon the increase of the species in those *great towns* where nature intended that the moral limitations on increase should operate with the greatest force, and the institutions of society have prevented their effect taking place, it is a most material circumstance, well deserving of the most attentive consideration.

The difference between the rate of mortality in large, and still more in great manufacturing towns and rural districts or villages, is always considerable, —often so great as to be attended with the most important effects. The average rate of mortality over all England is 1 in 51: whereas in Glasgow, from 1821 to 1837, it has been progressively increasing, till, from an annual decease of 1 in 39.89, in the first of these years, it had sunk so low as 1 in 24.63 in the last.† Of this prodigious mortality, which Dr Cowan justly calls "unequalled in any city in Britain," great part is without doubt to be ascribed to the factory system, and prevalence of habits of intemperance among the people, which will hereafter form the subject of an ample commentary;‡ but part of it is to be attributed to the physical effect of the atmosphere of great cities

* Ante, I. 44. † Cowan's Vital Statistics of Glasgow, p. 24.
‡ Infra, Chap. XVI.

upon young children, which more or less prevails all over the world. And of the importance of that atmosphere on the health of those of tender years, decisive evidence is to be found in the fact, which the same able and indefatigable observer has established, that during all these years, from 50 to 55 per cent. of this great mortality took place among children under ten years of age.* Even in London, where such extraordinary efforts are made to preserve the health of the people, the annual mortality is 1 in 41, being 20 per cent. greater than that of all England; while in Edinburgh it ranges, of late years, from 1 in 25 to 1 in 32,†—probably less than half of that of all Scotland.

The statistical researches which have been made over all the other countries of Europe exhibit the same general result as to the effect of great towns in diminishing the rate of increase. In the whole of England, the annual rate of mortality below ten years of age increases just in proportion as manufactures are established, that is, as great towns are prevalent; and diminishes as the people are devoted to rural occupations;‡ while the same is observed in Holland,§

* Cowan, ut supra.

† Dr Alison on the Poor in Scotland, p. 4–9.

‡ Out of 10,000 deaths in England between 1813 and 1830 there were

	Under 10 years of age.	Above 10 years.
In agricultural districts,	3505	3142
Partly manufacturing and partly agricultural,	3828	3318
Partly manufacturing,	4355	3727

This table clearly demonstrates that it is in children under ten years of age that great towns chiefly operate in increasing the rate of mortality.—See Quetelet, i. 206, and Rickmann's Population Tables, 1831.

§ In Holland the annual mortality in the agricultural provinces is 1 in 53.7: in the commercial towns 1 in 35.—Quetelet, i. 206.

Belgium,* and France.† It is superfluous to overload these pages with similar details, drawn from other countries of Europe; for the fact is so evident, and is so completely within every one's observation, that it would have required no illustration, if it had not lain at the foundation of an important provision of nature relative to the increase of mankind, which makes the inhabitants of great towns almost always unable to support their own numbers, and renders those great emporiums of opulence, if due provision for the humbler classes is not made, the charnel-houses of the human race.

Of the combined effects of these moral and physical restraints upon the increase of mankind, which acquire additional force with the progress of society, until at length they render it nearly if not altogether stationary, and their perfect consistency with the highest state of general felicity, and the most abundant supply of the means of subsistence to all classes, it is impossible to figure a more apt illustration than the kingdom of Belgium exhibits. That its beautiful plains are the richest and most highly cultivated in Europe is known to every traveller: that they have for six hundred years been the seat of opulence and numbers, and were overspread with commerce and manufactures, when the arts in Great Britain were still in their infancy, is historically certain. Its population, which exceeds even that of Ireland in density, is no less than 365 to the square mile, being the densest in the world: you cannot travel twenty miles in any direction in its territory without coming to a considerable, often a large town: the villages are in-

* Quetelet, i. 207.

† Ibid. i. 207. Chateauneuf in Moniteur, 11th May 1831.

numerable. Here then is a country where the population is at once aged and dense, opulent, and highly civilized. If there is any community in Europe in which the pressure of population or subsistence said to be unavoidable in the later stages of society should be evinced, it is this.

Now what is the fact? So far from population having outstripped the means of subsistence, the powers of agricultural production have immensely exceeded those of human increase; and though the rural population is numerous, the town population is so much more so, that in no quarter of the globe does the earth yield so vast a surplus to the maintenance of the other classes in the state. Manufactures have suffered in many places from the shifting of the channels of commerce, but agriculture is undecayed; and its vast and annually increasing surplus is the great source of the prodigious opulence, as well as maintenance of the many and splendid towns which overspread its territory. The numbers of the people are great, but, so far from being redundant, they are within the limits of general comfort: the working classes everywhere find a comfortable maintenance, and in no quarter of Europe is the traveller so much struck with the extraordinary degree of well-being conspicuous among the peasantry;* while so powerful has the operation of the preventive check become, from the spread of artificial wants, and the high standard of comfort among the working classes, that the rate of increase is considerably less than half of what it is in the agricultural countries of Ireland

* Personal Observation.

and Hungary;* while the great proportion of marriages contracted in middle life proves that it is prudential consideration, not want or suffering, which has there come to retard the rate of increase.†

The limitations to population which have now been considered operate in a certain degree from the infancy of society. Among the simple inhabitants of pastoral or agricultural districts, the diffusion of information, and the desire of adding to their little capital, as in Switzerland, Sweden, and Scotland, prevent the increase of the people from exceeding the limits which their comfort requires. In commercial or manufacturing districts, as Holland, Flanders, and England, the ambition of rising in society, springing from the facilities of commercial enterprise and the diffusion of artificial wants, which follows the increase of public opulence, establish habits which effectually prevent a redundant population. Accommodated as the human mind is to the varying circumstances of society, it possesses within itself principles calculated to regulate the rate of increase in every situation in which it can be placed by the progress of mankind. Where a rapid multiplication of his numbers is required to overcome

* Rate of increase annually:

Ireland,	2.45
Hungary,	2.4
England,	1.66
Austria,	1.3
Belgium,	.94
Lombardy,	.45.—Quetelet, i. 292.

† Marriages in Belgium of men.

Between 16 and 20,	24
20 to 25,	637
25 — 30,	2199
30 — 35,	1541
35 — 40,	51.—Quetelet, i. 68.

the difficulties which await the species in the infancy of society, the principle of population is unlimited in its operation: at a later period, the same circumstance which renders a retardation necessary, awakens the desires destined for its limitation.

In this, as in every other instance, the laws of nature are enforced, in human affairs, by the developement of active propensities springing from the circumstances which call for their operation. Essential as a change in the habits of mankind is to their welfare, when the situations in which they are placed has undergone an alteration, it is brought about without the actors by whom it is accomplished being conscious of its operation. They are never called upon to do violence to their inclinations, or to sacrifice their happiness for the welfare of the community to which they belong. It is in consulting their own wishes, and in striving after their own enjoyments, that they are led to do that which the interests of society require. By the wisdom of nature, the welfare of the individual is made the basis on which the prosperity of the whole fabric of human prosperity is rested: their exertions for their own advancement are the means by which not only provision is made for a further multiplication of the species, but the desires awakened which regulate its increase. The same Invisible Hand which has fitted the wing of the bird to the air, and the fin of the fish to the water, has watched with equal solicitude over the still more important concerns of the social world, and has adapted the human mind, not to one, but to every situation in which it can be placed, and every exigency to which it can be reduced from the physical situation of the species.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE PROGRESS OF SOCIETY WHICH LIMIT THE DEMAND FOR LABOUR.

ARGUMENT.

Changes in the condition of Society which limit the demand for Labour—Alteration in the employment of Capital, its important effect in this way—From the change in the direction of Wealth from productive to unproductive employments—From the fall in the value of Money in all opulent States—From the introduction and improvement of Machinery which supersedes human labour—From the multiplication of Animals and Luxury, and the growth of a superior mode of living among all classes—Proof from statistical facts that these changes are consistent with the highest degree of well-being among the people.

NOTWITHSTANDING the changes in human affairs, and in the habits of mankind, which have a tendency to restrain the disposition to increase in the later stages of society, it is sufficiently clear that, unless some checks were provided to the *demand for labour*, the security against the dangers of a redundant population would be incomplete. The facilities to the multiplication of the species in the later periods of social existence, arising from the security of property, the improvement of arts, and the abundance of capital, are so great, that, if the encouragement to industry remained the same as in earlier times, the approach of mankind to the limits of subsistence would be much more rapid than is consistent either with their welfare or their destiny. The duplication of the numbers of a small tribe, surrounded by an inexhaustible extent of land susceptible of cultivation, in twenty or thirty

years, is an obvious advantage. But the duplication of twenty millions of inhabitants in the same period stands in a very different situation. How great soever the productive powers of rural industry may be, there is a limit, though far removed from mortal ken, beyond which they cannot be carried; and it would therefore be a most serious evil if the human race were to approach this boundary before the changes in the objects of general desire which are calculated to meet such a situation, had been fully developed. And even although the limitations to population were in complete operation, still, if the demand for labour went on increasing in the rapid ratio of which it is capable, in the later stages of national existence, the race would get over the ground much too rapidly, and society would arrive at a stationary condition before most of the purposes of human existence had been accomplished.

The important object of effecting this retardation is secured by the operation of a variety of causes, which tend in the later stages of social progress to limit the demand for labour, and divert the capital of the state into other channels than those which afford a direct encouragement to population.

I. The first circumstance which produces this effect is the change in the *employment of capital* which takes place in the progress of national wealth.

Mr Smith has fully explained the causes of this change in the Wealth of Nations, and it has been recently illustrated with much ability by another distinguished writer.* In this place it is only necessary to point out its effects on the progress of population.

* Brougham's Colonial Policy, i. 214.

The first employment of capital is the cultivation of the soil, and such rude manufactures as are necessary for the convenience of simple times. This is the situation in which it offers the most direct encouragement to the increase of mankind, because it is entirely employed in the support of domestic industry. The wealth of the back settlements of America, of Upper Canada, or of the Ukraine, is almost entirely devoted to the payment of agricultural labour: that is, it is entirely spent in affording the means to the multiplication of rural labourers. The returns in such situations are extremely rapid: the crop of the first year repays the whole expense of clearing the ground, and every man of common industry, though he begins without any capital, finds himself, at the expiration of four or five years, not only in a situation to rear a family, but completely removed from the danger of actual want.* If the protection of a tolerable government is added to these natural advantages, no circumstances can be imagined more favourable to the multiplication of mankind.

In the progress of improvement, however, the increase in the wants of men gradually gives a different destination to part of the national wealth. With the means of purchasing the conveniences and luxuries of life, there springs up the desire to possess them, and this gives rise to the separation of employments, and the introduction of a class of men who transport the produce of industry from the place where it is raised to that where it is required. Hence the direction of capital towards manufactures and commerce.

The wealth which is employed in the home trade,

* Howison's Canada, i. 272.

and in manufactures for home consumption, is entirely devoted to the encouragement of domestic industry, but the facilities thereby afforded to the multiplication of the species are not so great as when agriculture forms the principal pursuit of the people. The reason is obvious. When capital is laid out in agriculture it *not only* yields a return to the farmer, *but also* communicates a degree of fertility to the soil which renders it capable of producing an enlarged produce, and furnishing the means of maintaining an additional number of inhabitants for an indefinite period. But when expended in manufactures or commerce, the same wealth *only* yields a return for the capital employed, with a profit for the use of the employer: there is *no* permanent addition *besides this* made to the wealth of the state, which may afford the means of maintaining an increased number of individuals. For example, if L. 100,000 be expended in trade or manufactures, at the end of ten years it may have increased to L. 200,000, besides maintaining the capitalist and those whom he employed, in comfort during that period. But beyond this there is hardly any addition made to the permanent revenue of the state, or to the means of supporting an increased population. But if the same sum be employed in agriculture, besides maintaining the farmers in comfort during the period of its employment, and doubling itself, as in the hands of the manufacturer, it makes a permanent addition to the capability of the soil, which *for ever* yields a greatly increased revenue to the landed proprietor. If the merchant withdraws his wealth from its employment, he has no doubt amassed a fortune for himself, and has probably fur-

nished the means of doing so to the persons who were engaged in his traffic; but he has left no permanent source of wealth to the state. But if the farmer withdraws his capital, besides having realized a fortune to himself, and having given the means of doing so to his dependants, he has left a *great addition to the fertility of the soil*, which is a lasting cause of opulence to his country.

This is the true reason of the great difference between the *permanent* encouragement given to population by the employment of wealth in agriculture, and in commerce and manufactures. In the one case, the riches, besides reproducing themselves with a profit, make an undecaying addition to the wealth of the community, and the means of maintaining the people. In the other, the capital only reproduces itself with profit, and leaves behind it in addition, with the exception of the buildings or machinery of the manufacturer, no lasting provision for an increased population. The encouragement to industry, and consequently the impulse to increase, at the time, may be greater by the employment of wealth in commerce than in agriculture: but the ultimate effect is very different: the continual stream of wealth which flows from the soil after the capital is withdrawn from it, and vested in other occupations, becomes much more than sufficient in the end to counterbalance the temporary stimulus given by mercantile enterprise. Hence the agricultural prosperity of the great commercial states of Europe in former times has long survived the prosperity of their cities, and the decay of their manufacturing industry. The arts and the trading enterprise of Flanders have long since been on the de-

cline, but agriculture is still undecayed; the manufactures of Florence are no longer sought after in every part of Europe; but the cultivation of the Tuscan Hills never was surpassed:* and the plain of Lombardy is still the garden of European cultivation, though the wealth of Venice and Milan no longer pour their vivifying streams along the waters of the Po.† Should any political convulsion, or the insensible change in the channels of trade, deprive Britain of her commercial superiority, the population of her great cities will rapidly decline: but she will possess an undecaying resource for her rural population in the industry of her peasantry and the fertility of her fields.

These considerations unfold one of the first limitations to the demand for labour which arises in the progress of society from the improvement and civilisation of mankind. It is in cultivating the soil, that is, *in aiding the productive powers of nature*, that the greatest possible encouragement is afforded to the increase of population, not only by giving present employment to the people, but securing the means of their future subsistence. The direction of part of the national wealth into manufacturing or commercial employment, though it may occasion a more rapid increase to its amount at the time, has not the same effect in permanently enlarging the demand for labour, because it has given *no impulse to the productive powers of nature*, and has left no permanent provision besides itself for the future employment of mankind.

As wealth increases, the extension of the wants of

* Chateauvieux de l'Italie, 300, 303.

† Young's Travels, ii. 177–190, 203, 209. Chateauvieux, 278.

men gradually introduces the foreign trade, that is, the exchange of home productions for those of foreign states. The immediate effect of this is to withdraw capital from the *double* employment of domestic industry, and bestow one-half of its encouragement upon that of foreign states. The merchant who exchanges the manufactures of Britain for its agricultural produce, supports the industry both of the farmer and manufacturer of his country: but he who exports its fabrics, and brings back in return the produce of foreign states, vivifies the industry of another country as well as his own. This change has an important effect on the demand for labour. The returns of the foreign trade, besides being divided between two different states, are much slower than those of the home. Capital circulates three times in Britain for once that it reaches and comes back from the Levant or the Baltic, and six times during the period required for a return from the Indian or Chinese seas. But the more rapid the returns of a trade, the more extensive is the encouragement which it gives to the industry of the persons whom it occupies. The more, therefore, that the capital of a country is directed towards foreign trade, the more is it withdrawn from the encouragement of domestic industry, and the more distant that trade is, the less is the impulse which it gives to the labour of the country from which it sprung.

The round about foreign trade of consumption and the carrying trade, are the last channels into which the capital of a commercial country is turned from the progress of national opulence. In these situations the support given to domestic industry is the least that can occur. With the exception of the sailors or

shipwrights whom he employs in transporting merchandise from one part of the world to another, the merchant who devotes his wealth to the carrying trade puts in motion no part of the industry of his own country. Even this encouragement, small as it is, is not unfrequently shared with the seafaring classes in foreign states. The industry which he really encourages, is that of the states between which he acts as carrier, to each of which he furnishes a ready vent for articles which would otherwise accumulate unprofitably in the hands of the producers. The English merchant who transports the grain of Odessa to the mouth of the Elbe, or the Seine, and carries back in return the printed goods of Saxony to the Black Sea, does much for the industry of Russia and Germany, or France, but little for that of his own country.

Colonies form the natural outlet both for the surplus capital and the redundant population of commercial states. It has been a leading object in the policy, accordingly, of all such empires to establish these distant offshoots, from whose industry and exertions they might derive the advantages of mercantile intercourse without the risk of interruption from foreign wars. Athens and Rome in ancient times, Venice and Genoa in the middle ages, have successively endeavoured to secure these advantages, by the plantation of colonies round the shores of the Mediterranean, many of which have laid the foundation of cities which still continue to flourish, notwithstanding the decay of the states from which they sprung. The discovery of the new world has opened a wider field for the exertions of colonial enterprise, and Spain and Portugal, Holland and Britain, have successively entered upon this adventurous

career; and from their exertions mighty republics have sprung, which promise soon to exceed the mother countries in wealth and numbers.

There can be no doubt that the observation of a powerful writer is well founded,* and that colonies are to be regarded as distant provinces of the empire, rather than independent states. As long as they adhere to the mother country, they offer a double encouragement to domestic industry, by the wealth they produce in the colony itself, and that which they call forth in the parent state, which furnishes them with the manufactured articles which they require. But with reference to the encouragement to population, the effect is the same whether the colony is regarded as a distant part of the same empire, or as a foreign state. In either case, the wealth which is devoted to its cultivation is withdrawn from a situation where capital is abundant, and the impulse to the extension of mankind limited to one where it is comparatively scanty, and the capability for the multiplication of the species unbounded. And even with reference to national wealth, the distinction ceases in the lapse of time; the colony when it acquires sufficient strength breaks the connection with the empire from which it sprung, and the intercourse between them is carried on on the footing of independent states.

When wealth becomes extremely abundant, these different outlets for the employment of capital are found to be insufficient, and the increasing difficulty of finding a profitable investment at home leads to the dispersion of money in the form of loans to foreign states. "It will first go," as has been well observed,

* Brougham's Colonial Policy.

"to the foreign trades of slow returns, then to the loans required by colonies, and if the state possesses no such colonies, it will overflow into foreign colonies by loan or emigration; into foreign countries by insurance or loan, and into the service of foreign government by bond or pledge. Even if Holland had possessed no colonies, its wealth would never have remained in the home market, or in the agriculture of the state; it would have sought an issue like the wealth of Venice, partly in foreign loans, and partly by carrying away its proprietors to foreign countries, or rather, we ought to say, that more of it would have gone in this way than actually has; for, notwithstanding the extent of its colonial adventures, no people in the world ever lent so much money to foreign colonies, foreign states, or foreign governments, as the Dutch, or carried on so great a trade in foreign brokerage or insurance."

Frequently in the course of the last century, the wealth of Britain has arrived at this state of overgrown magnificence, and of course has come to require the outlet of distant speculations. The accumulation of capital during the long peace which succeeded the treaty of Utrecht, led to the insane speculations of the South Sea scheme; and the same cause a century after gave rise to that wild spirit of adventure which terminated so fatally in the great commercial catastrophes of December 1825 and spring 1837. Nothing but the great drain to the national wealth which the wars of the last century, and particularly the long and expensive struggle which succeeded the French Revolution, occasioned, has pre-

* Brougham's Colonial Policy, i. 214.

vented the capital of Britain from becoming altogether redundant, and overflowing in a continual stream into the employment of foreign states. No sooner did the peace of Paris in 1815 put a period to this system of internal consumption, than the fall in the interest of money and the rise of the funds again restored wealth to its natural channels, and the capital of the country eagerly sought the attractions of foreign investment. The immense sums which were vested in loans to the South American republics, great part of which have since been lost, and the prodigious extent to which mercantile establishments, founded on British capital, have been carried in every part of the civilized world, proves both the magnitude of the stream which has thus flowed into foreign channels, and the strong tendency which commercial wealth in later times has to take such a direction.

Not only is the capital of a mercantile country, in the later stages of its progress, diverted from the encouragement of domestic industry by its tendency to flow into foreign speculation, but its growth at home is checked by the fall in the profit of stock, which necessarily attends such accumulation. The rate of interest affords an index to this diminution. It has already fallen since the peace to 4 per cent. in this country, and in Holland, prior to the French war, it was so low as 2½ per cent., and the 3 per cents. were as high as 147. The profits of stock must be very trifling, when so little is offered for the use of money, and so much given for the purchase of an annuity. The effects of this change upon the growth of capital are highly important. Wealth cannot accumulate fast when its annual profits are so inconsiderable.

Lastly, the changes in the direction of commercial

enterprise, which insensibly take place in the lapse of time, put a final stop to the growth of mercantile capital in particular situations. The history of the world affords many instances of such alterations. The Tyrians and Athenians once possessed the whole commerce of the Mediterranean, but, with the growth of the Roman power, the channels of trade were gradually altered, and Alexandria and Palmyra became the emporiums between the wealth of the east, and the industry of the west. The transference of the imperial residence to Constantinople gave a new direction to mercantile enterprise; Palmyra and Alexandria were deserted, and the riches of India were brought by a circuitous route, from the Euphrates to the Caspian and the Black Sea.* The mercantile states of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa seized on this lucrative branch of commerce, which the indolent Greeks could not retain: the establishments of Pera and Galata became opulent cities, and, from the profits of this traffic, the wealth of these splendid republics is chiefly to be ascribed.† With the revival of industry in the south of Europe, the arts of Florence arose; and at the period of the invasion of Charles VIII., the manufactures of that city had risen to the highest perfection; her citizens numbered all the kings of Europe among their debtors, and her senate did not hesitate to bid defiance to the most powerful monarch of Europe, at the head of all the chivalry of his empire.‡

The discovery of the passage of the Cape of Good Hope gave a fatal blow to the commerce of the Italian states; and, from the facilities of their local situation and the advantages of first discovery, the spirit

* Gibbon's Rome, iv. 17–41.

† Sismondi's Ital. Rep. iv. 372–409. ‡ Ibid. v. 369.

of commercial enterprise spread to the citizens of Spain and Portugal. The splendour of Cadiz and Lisbon, however, was destined to be of short duration: the hardy seamen of the north tore from them the sceptre of the seas, and with the freedom of Holland and England, the treasures of Indian opulence and merchandize gradually settled on the British shores. Unable to cope with the might and the energy of England, the industry of Flanders and Holland have subsequently declined, and the whole trade of the world, with the undisputed sovereignty of the ocean, has settled in the British isles. Notwithstanding the advantages of her insular situation, and the energy which freedom has given to her people, it would be presumptuous to anticipate that this prosperous state will always continue, and that this country is to be alone exempted from those vicissitudes which every other commercial state has experienced. That she will not suffer the rapid decline of Holland or Venice, may fairly be presumed from the magnitude and varied nature of her resources: but the advantage of freedom and knowledge cannot remain exclusively her own: and, with the growth of industry and intelligence in other states, a share in the mercantile intercourse of the world must necessarily be enjoyed by their people. If their own energy is not sufficient to procure for them these advantages, the wealth of Britain itself will furnish them with the means; and the natural tendency of exuberant capital to seek foreign employment will spread the seeds of prosperity throughout the world.

It is obvious, therefore, that there is a limit imposed to the growth of capital in every country, by the height to which itself has arisen; and that it flows into foreign channels, when the reservoirs at home

are supplied, as naturally and inevitably as a stream which has fertilized its own plains descends to enrich inferior soils.

The effects of this law of nature upon the demand for labour, and the progress of population, are in the highest degree important. In the earlier ages of society, when the country is poor and uncultivated, and abundance of room exists for an increased population, capital is devoted to those investments where its returns are most frequent, and it gives the greatest encouragement to domestic industry. As wealth increases, and the means of supporting an increased population cease to be so abundant, capital is gradually withdrawn from the employments, where it gives the greatest impulse to domestic industry, and vested in those where it shares its encouragement with the inhabitants of foreign states. In proportion as the funds for the maintenance of labour at home approach a stationary condition, the capital which maintains it is gradually withdrawn from the encouragement of domestic industry, and turned into those channels which call forth the resources of other countries. At length, when industry at home has been brought to its highest perfection, the surplus capital of the state is wholly turned into foreign channels; and after having brought the population of its own territory to the highest level which is consistent with the welfare of mankind, it seeks those poorer states where its aid is required to assist the multiplication of the species, in situations where no danger can attend its increase.

This important law of nature for the regulation of population, and the equalization of the demand for labour over the world, is carried into effect, like every other governing principle of the social system, by the

efforts of individuals for their own benefit. The capitalist who seeks the most advantageous investment for his wealth, is guided by nothing but his own interest. This interest, however, leads him in the various stages of society to employ his money in a different manner, and the change in these employments is precisely that which the welfare of mankind requires. It is in the ultimate effect of actions beyond what the individual either perceives or intends, that the wisdom of Nature is visible in human affairs.

The injustice of political institutions, and the dread of arbitrary violence, have been the principal circumstance in the past history of the world which have checked the operation of this beneficent law. Capital has generally accumulated in free states which were surrounded by despotic empires or barbarous tribes. Its emigration was prevented in such circumstances by the well-grounded apprehension of confiscation. Such are the restraints which an absolute government, even when animated by the best intentions, unavoidably imposes on industry, that it more than compensates the attraction of the high profits which the scantiness of capital produces. The history of the world is full of examples where capital has been cooped up in situations where it had been fostered by favourable institutions, in consequence of the violence or barbarism by which it was surrounded. At the time that Athens was unable to find employment for its commercial wealth, the shores of the Black Sea, abounding with all the riches of nature, were comparatively deserted. When the interest of money was 2½ per cent. in Holland, it was frequently as high as 12 per cent. in the neighbouring kingdoms of Poland and Russia, and 48 *per cent.* in the provinces of Hin-

dostan.* Edward III. of England was glad to borrow at the rate of 12 per cent. from the Florentine merchants, when the commercial cities of Italy were overflowing with unemployed capital. † It is superfluous to recur to the page of history for confirmation of this remark. The foreign stock exchange at this moment, 1840, affords ample evidence of its truth. At present, when the interest of money in London is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., 8, 10, and even 20 per cent. is in vain offered by some foreign states; and while British capital is unable to discover a profitable investment, and is daily perishing in loans to distant republics, the fields of Ireland offer a boundless field for enterprise, which the turbulence of the Irish poor, and the insanity of their political leaders, have withdrawn from the blessings of British improvement.‡

The erroneous policy of government has frequently interfered with the natural progress of opulence, and consequently counteracted the operation of this law of population. It is difficult to say whether the religious bigotry of the Chinese and Japanese, who retain a redundant capital amidst an overgrown people, by sanguinary prohibitions against foreign commerce; or the commercial system of the European monarchies, which attracted wealth into foreign employment by artificial encouragement, when a scanty population at home was lingering for want of capital to maintain its industry, were most subversive of the system of nature. It would be presumptuous to pursue farther

* Mill's India, i. 274.

† Villani, 824.

‡

Per Cent.	Price.	Per Cent.	Price.	Per Cent.	Price.
British 3 per cents.	L.91	Dutch 5,	L.100	Mexican 6,	L.23
Belgian 5 do.	105	Russian 5,	113	Peruvian 6,	16
French 3 do.	84	Brazilian 5,	76	Portuguese 5,	35
Danish 3 do.	78	Columbia 6,	23	Spanish 5,	28

—Times, April 15, 1840.

a path which has been fully explored in the Wealth of Nations: it is sufficient to observe, that such mistaken systems interfere not less with the laws destined for the regulation of the increase, than for the progress of the wealth of mankind.

II. While the natural progress of opulence, and the changes in the employment of capital by the monied interest, lead to the limitation of the demand for labour in the later stages of society, the increased expenditure of all classes arising from the growth of luxury, or the embarrassments of government, powerfully contribute to the same effect.

Enough has already been said of the natural tendency of enlarged wealth to produce an increase in artificial wants, and on the important consequences of that change on the habits and standard of comfort among the labouring classes. Its effects on the growth of opulence, and ultimately on the demand for labour, are equally important.

When wealth is stored up in the form of capital, and employed in the maintenance of productive labour, it *not only* puts in motion a certain quantity of domestic employment, but *reproduces itself* in the hands of the capitalist, and forms a fund for the future maintenance of industry with the same returns. But when wealth is dissipated by being employed in revenue, it *only* puts in motion the industry which it has purchased, and does *not* reproduce itself in the hands of the employer. For example, if L. 10,000 is laid out annually for ten years in agriculture or manufactures, it employs during that period perhaps 100 persons, and gives them the means of living in comfort for the whole time, and *besides this*, it brings

in a return to the employer, which at the close of the period puts him in possession of probably L. 15,000, in addition to a comfortable livelihood during the time of the undertaking. But if the same L. 10,000 is spent in the form of revenue, it *only* maintains the 100 persons whom it employs, and keeps in comfort during the period of its expenditure: there is *no fund* existing in the hands of the person who spends the money at the end of the time, to put industry in motion in future years. Part of the money expended may no doubt be realized in permanent objects, such as buildings, furniture, dress, or the like: but the greatest proportion is consumed, and that which is extant, though it may add to the permanent and immoveable stock of the nation, is entirely withdrawn from the active encouragement of labour.

This distinction constitutes the essential difference between the employment of wealth as *capital*, and its dissipation as *revenue*: and shows the fallacy of those who imagine that a lavish expenditure on the part of the rich, is the only security for national prosperity, because it gives the greatest immediate impulse to industry. That it does so is certain: but while it encourages labour it does not reproduce the capital which maintains it: and the greater the present stimulus, the greater may be the distress which follows when that expenditure terminates. A landed proprietor who daily contracts debts in maintaining an overgrown establishment, may enhance the demand for labour on his estate during the continuance of his outlay: but that will not prevent both himself and his tenantry being involved in distress when his career has drawn to a close, and his wasteful extravagance can no longer be kept up.

When a large proportion of the revenue of a nation is in this manner consumed in the gratification of immediate enjoyments, serious effects are produced on the accumulation of capital, and, consequently, on the future increase in the demand for labour. If L.10,000,000 a-year is withdrawn from the employment of capital, and squandered in the form of revenue, the difference in the capital of the state, at the end of ten years will be at least L.120,000,000, and at the end of twenty years probably three hundred millions. This must be the case, although the encouragement to industry at the moment, is greater on the extravagant than the saving system; the difference arising from this, that in the one case, the expenditure arises from the destruction, in the other from the reproduction of wealth.

What is true of the extravagance of individuals is not less so of the more gigantic outlay of governments. The abstraction of the gains of individuals by taxes, or the absorption of the savings of the nation in annual loans, which are employed in an unproductive form, check the growth of capital in the most decisive manner, because they turn so much of the public expenditure into an employment where it *perishes without reproducing itself*, or producing a fund from which its interest is to be defrayed in future years. For example, if twenty millions a-year are raised by taxes, and twenty millions more by loan, to maintain an expensive system of hostility, the present encouragement to industry is no doubt very great, and perhaps equal to what it would have been if expended by individuals in speculations promising a profit, in consequence of the number of soldiers and sailors, naval and military artificers, and other workmen, who are di-

rectly or indirectly employed by government. But the capital which put them in motion is *not reproduced* by their exertions, but is entirely dissipated: the proof of which is, that the future interest of the loan must be raised by taxes on the labour of the state, instead of arising from a fund which the employment of the money by government had created. Whereas, if the same sum had been laid out by the individuals from whom it was received, in the employment of productive industry, besides giving the same impulse at the moment to the industry of the state, it would have reproduced itself in a permanent form, and furnished a durable fund for the maintenance of labour, without taking anything from the industrious classes. If we suppose forty millions a-year to be in this manner expended by government for twenty years, the effect would be the addition of four hundred millions to the public debt, and the *non-existence* of eight hundred millions in the hands of the people, which would have been reproduced by the employment of the same sum with ordinary profit in productive labour by the individuals from whom it was abstracted. The final result, therefore, is, that the capital of the state is eight hundred millions *less*, and the public burdens twenty millions *more*, than they otherwise would have been; and, if we suppose that eight hundred millions to yield $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as the profits of its annual outlay, the national income is for ever sixty millions a-year less than it otherwise would have been, and the public burdens twenty millions a-year greater.

There can be no doubt that this effect would take place, if the *whole* of the L. 40,000,000 employed by Government on the public service were to be employed in the maintenance of productive industry

by the individuals to whom it belonged. But it is equally clear that this never could exactly ensue. A large part of it would be dissipated in the form of revenue, and so become equally incapable of reproducing itself in the hands of individuals, as in those of Government. But there can be no doubt that the *whole* would not be so consumed; and, in particular, the money lent to Government in the shape of loans would almost all have been laid out by the proprietors in a productive form, because it is part of the capital of the state intended to be employed as a source of income, and destined, of course, to such branches of industry as reproduces itself with a profit to the employer. The weight of taxes, too, falls with peculiar force upon the growth of capital; because they abstract the hard earned gains of the middling ranks, and, by carrying off that portion of their income which *exceeds* their necessary expenditure, dry up those little streams whose accumulated flow form the great reservoir of national opulence.

It is not unusual to hear it asserted, that it is a mistake to suppose that there is this essential distinction between the employment of wealth, either on the part of Government or of individuals in the form of revenue, and its being devoted to productive employments in the shape of capital, because it is said even when it is spent as revenue, it still puts the labour of some industrious classes in motion, and remains in the country to the effect of conferring a lasting benefit upon society. But a little reflection must be sufficient to show that there is a fallacy in this observation, and that the difference between wealth sunk in the unproductive form of revenue, or in the productive one of manufacturing or agricultural investment, is in reality just as great as has been now stated, and,

consequently, that the direction of a large and increasing proportion of the national wealth annually to expenditure, must operate with great force in the later stages of society in diminishing the growth of capital, and, consequently, retarding the demand for labour. If capital is spent in revenue even of the most ephemeral or unprofitable kind, it no doubt goes from the hand of him that spends to the hand of him that receives, and if not laid out in the purchase of foreign luxuries, it is not ultimately lost to the state. But neither is the wealth which is laid out in productive employment lost to the state; it equally goes from the hands of the spender to the hands of the receiver; and, therefore, in so far as it benefits the latter, it stands in the same situation with the expenditure of money for the mere purposes of enjoyment. But then there is this essential distinction between the two cases, that the wealth which is devoted to productive investments, *in addition* to the encouragement given to the persons employed, reproduces itself in the hands *of the spender*, and permanently enriches him and his descendants; whereas that which is squandered in the purchase of luxuries is in great part lost to him and his heirs, and reproduces itself only in the persons of those whose productions he acquires. Thus, in the one case, there is a double encouragement to industry, and increment to national wealth: in the other, only a single one.

It is without doubt true, that a certain proportion must be reserved in every community between producers and consumers; for this obvious reason, that if there were no consumers, and the whole wealth of the state were employed in a productive form, industry could find no vent for its productions, and the market for hu-

man exertion would in a great measure be stopped up. But it is the vast augmentation in the demand for labour on the part of unproductive consumers which occasions so great an effect on that demand in the later, compared with the earlier stages of society. The exchange of the surplus of one productive citizen against the productive surplus produce of another, creates not only a mutual encouragement to industry, but a mutual growth of capital in the hands of both parties, whereas, when one of the parties is a mere idle consumer, the growth goes on only on one side. It is the continual interchange of the surplus of one productive labourer with that of another of the same description, which is the great source of the rapid progress both in wealth and numbers of young and industrious communities; while the transference of a large part of the national wealth into unproductive hands, is a material element in inducing the stationary order of things which invariably ensues in the later stages, whether of manufacturing or agricultural states.

Of the first of these stages of society, Holland and the Italian republics in former times, and Great Britain and America at present, are remarkable examples; of the certain advent of the latter, the present comparatively stationary condition of Venice, Genoa, Milan, and Florence, afford the most signal illustrations; and the slightest consideration of the present state of society in the British islands, and of the vast portions of its industrial wealth, which are every year detached from the encouragement of productive industry, and stored up either in land or money, as a fund to insure the means of luxurious living and indolent enjoyments to its possessors, must be sufficient to convince every reflecting mind, that this check upon the railway speed

of the growth of capital, and consequent demand for labour, has already arrived in this country; and that, but for the vast colonial empire of which it forms the centre, the effects of which will be afterwards considered, it must have retarded the growth of opulence and of mankind in this, as it has done in all other states.

These considerations explain the real cause, both of the extraordinary prosperity enjoyed by the labouring classes during the late war, and the severe depression which attended the return of peace. The capital of individuals is taken from them in the form of taxes, or advanced by them to Government in the shape of loans, to an enormous extent during war, and the immense sums thus acquired are for the most part employed in the payment of labour. Soldiers, sailors, artisans, mechanics, all are paid by Government: prices both of agricultural and manufacturing industry rise in consequence of the profuse expenditure of that great paymaster: rents advance, mercantile profits are frequently high, and a general spirit of confidence pervades the state. But these intoxicating draughts are drawn from the vitals of the state. The capital which puts in motion so much industry *is in great part destroyed* in the moment of its employment; its diffusion spreads temporary prosperity throughout the industrious classes, but *leaves no fund behind* for their permanent support; and when the excitation arising from its rapid circulation has passed away, the only traces which remain are a numerous body of labourers whom it has left without employment, and who have become a lasting burden upon the industry of the state which its loss has enfeebled. The encouragement to industry, which arises from the demand for productive labourers

in pacific times, is the greatest public benefit, because the same employment of capital which gives an impulse at the moment reproduces itself, and creates a fund for their future maintenance: the encouragement arising from a profuse war expenditure is often in the end a great calamity, because it springs from the destruction ofthe capital which had occasioned it; and annihilates the resources from which the population whom it has produced is to be maintained.

Had Great Britain not been involved in the arduous and unavoidable struggle for her existence with the French Revolution, the relative situation of her capital and her people would have been very different during the twenty years which followed its termination from what they actually were. The encouragement to population during the feverish years of the war would have been less; prices would have undergone no extraordinary elevation; wages would have remained more stationary. Her superfluous capital, which was beginning to overflow at its commencement, would have daily become more redundant, and in consequence more directed into foreign employment: the encouragement to industry from its employment would have been chiefly felt by foreign states, and the increase in the labouring classes at home would have been sensibly retarded. But if no feverish present excitation would have been experienced, similar to that produced by the expenditure of the war, no similar reverse would have been felt by the return of peace; one-tenth of the population of England would not in 1818 have been supported by parochial relief, nor their cost have been L. 7,870,000 a-year:* the capital available to the maintenance of domestic industry would

* Porter's Progress, i. 82.

have been far greater, and the numbers requiring its support much less. The situation, therefore, of the labouring classes, would have been much more comfortable, though their total amount would have been smaller than they now are. A considerable portion of the national wealth might have been lost in imprudent loans to foreign governments, or unfortunate speculations in distant states; but the proportion thus lost would have been much less than was destroyed by the long-continued consumption of the war; and even if it had been the same, it would not have left behind the lasting burden of indigent paupers, for whom there is little employment, or oppressive loans, for which taxes must be levied.

III. The increased outlay on the part of individuals and government, which follows the augmentation of wealth, affects the demand for labour, not only by checking the growth of capital, but by raising the prices of the necessaries of life, and consequently the money wages of the working classes. A profuse expenditure is always attended by high prices: where money is spread abroad with an unsparing hand, it purchases far less of food or the conveniences of life than where it is less abundant. The extreme difference in prices in remote provinces and the metropolis in every country, and between the value of the same sum, in an opulent and an indigent state, place this truth beyond a doubt. The well known expression of Johnson, when informed of the low price of eggs in the Highlands of Scotland, "that it was not because eggs were many, but *because pence were few*," points to the great effect of a scanty circulation upon the price of subsistence. The more that the

circulation is increased the less does its value become, and consequently the more are the money prices of every article augmented.

If this is true of an increased expenditure on the part of individuals, still more is it true of the far greater outlay of government. The effect of war upon the prices of every article of comfort or necessity is prodigious. Wheat in 1792, was forty shillings a quarter: in 1810, it had arisen to 120 shillings, and this price continued with little variation, while the outlay of the war continued. The return of peace has materially lowered prices: on an average from 1815 to 1840, it has been about 58 shillings a quarter.* Still this price is very great compared with what it bears at Dantzic or Odessa, where it varies from 20 to 35 shillings. It is needless to enlarge farther on a fact so well known, and so completely open to daily observation.

The increased circulation required for the interchange of an extended commerce, and which the substitution of paper for the precious metals so readily affords, has a most important effect on the rate of prices. There cannot be the smallest doubt that a great addition to the circulating medium rapidly raises the money price of every article, and that a corresponding diminution immediately lowers them. The effect of throwing an increased quantity of money into the market is precisely similar to that of throwing an enlarged supply of grain: its value is lowered, and the price of every article is elevated. This change is speedily brought about by the extended consumption of every individual, and the enhanced demand for labour which universal confidence pro-

* Tooke's Prices, ii. 390.

duces. When the issues of bankers are plentiful, credit is immediately established: the pressure of debts ceases to be so severe, from the lenity of creditors in exacting them: orders are freely given from the remoteness of the period at which payment is required: every man's pockets are full of money, and universal prosperity appears to prevail. This was the state of Britain during the year 1824 and the first half of 1825, and equally so in 1835 and 1836. High prices necessarily follow such an extended circulation: they are brought about by an immediate increase in consumption and speculation.

This was the true effect of the excessive issue of paper which followed the suspension of cash payments in 1797, concerning which so much has been written. Foreigners universally, speculative men in this country frequently, have mistaken the effect and the symptoms of the depreciation in the currency which followed that measure. It produced no effect upon the value of bank notes as compared with the precious metals, but a great effect upon the value of the *whole circulation, paper and metals together*, as compared with the other articles of life.* The proof of the depreciation was to be found, *not* in the bank-note being only worth 15 shillings, but in the *price of wheat being* 120 *shillings instead of* 60. If the bank-note had only brought 15 shillings, that would have been

* The author is well aware that the Bullion Committee, in 1810, were correct in point of fact in reporting, that the same debt, if paid in gold, could be discharged for 25 per cent. less than if paid in paper. But that was not because "notes were many, but because guineas were few." The war had drained them all away to the peninsula or the Austrian territories for the war of 1809. The real effect of the vast issue of paper appeared in the rapid rise in the price of all articles.—See Alison's History of Europe, viii. Chap. lx. p. 60.

no proof of the circulation being excessive, but only of the credit of the bank being doubtful. The true proof of the medium of exchange being redundant was the high price of every article of life, whether paid in paper, gold, or silver.

The depreciation of paper is of two kinds, arising from totally different causes. One species arises from *diminished credit* of the bank which issues, and is to be found in the lessened value of the note, as compared with the other circulation. If a bank-note will only sell for fifteen shillings, this is an indication of that species of depreciation. Another kind arises from the excessive plenty of the whole circulation, paper and metals together, arising from an over-issue of paper; and the proof of it is to be found, not in the lessened value of the notes, as compared with the other circulation, but in the diminished value of the whole circulation, when applied to the purchase of the other articles of life. If corn rises from 50 to 100 shillings a quarter after such an issue of paper, that is the proof that *this species of depreciation* has taken place. If the paper of the Bank of England was ever affected by the first species of decline in value, it was for a few weeks only: for no man can recollect the period when he was, for any length of time, refused twenty shillings for a Bank of England pound note: the second species of depreciation affected the country for above twenty years, and has recurred more than once since cash payments were resumed.

There is a permanent provision in the laws of Nature for a decline in the value of the circulating medium, and consequent elevation of prices, in every state which has advanced far in the career of opulence. Abundance of wealth will always produce habits of

expense: these habits will as uniformly draw after them an extended circulation, and high prices. The activity and increase of commercial capital will require an enlarged medium of circulation, and such an enlargement must render prices high, compared with what they are when it is more contracted. No provisions of the Legislature can check the operation of these equalizing principles. If the power of issuing bank notes were to be wholly withdrawn from the British capitalists, human ingenuity would speedily find the means of supplying the deficiency. The bills of individuals or private companies, to which no restrictions can be imposed, would be sent forth to fill up the void, and the dangers of paper circulation would reappear in a new and still more alarming form.

It would, perhaps, be going too far to affirm, that there is a permanent provision in the principles of human nature for the extravagance of Government, and the contraction of ruinous debts in the later stages of society; but this much may safely be asserted, that in no instance with which history makes us acquainted, has any state risen to a high degree of wealth and opulence without incurring such burdens. It was the severity of the Athenian taxes, levied chiefly on the cities in alliance with the republic, which rendered all the provinces of that flourishing empire so disaffected, and reduced the power of the state on the first considerable reverse to the strength of the metropolis alone. * The weight of the Roman taxes was so severely felt, in the later stages of the empire, as to render the inhabitants of the provinces indifferent to the preservation of the Roman power, and prepare the

* Mitford's Greece, iv. 114, 115.

way for the inroad of the Gothic tribes.* Holland and Venice, as Mr Smith has observed,† in modern times, have successively sunk under the weight of their public debt: and in France, before the Revolution, it appeared, from M. Necker's celebrated exposition, that the annual interest of the debt was 260 millions, equivalent to L.11,500,000 Sterling; the annual charges of Government 380 millions, or L. 16,700,000, while the total revenue was only 480 millions, or L. 21,000,000 Sterling; leaving an annual deficit of above L.7,000,000, to be added to the debt of the state.‡ In England, the public debt is still above L. 750,000,000, and the annual charge, notwithstanding the reduction of interest, above L. 29,500,000;§ and this immense burden has been contracted entirely since 1792,—the sinking fund having paid off all the debt which existed at that period.

To those who are unaccustomed to contemplate the prodigious effect which these changes have upon the fortune, especially of commercial states, even when no peculiar cause of external disaster has overthrown their power, or dried up their resources, it may be instructive to contemplate the picture which the history of the Italian republics affords. Florence, which now can number only 75,000 inhabitants, contained at the close of the fifteenth century 150,000, and, in 1496, ventured to measure strength with Charles VIII. at the head of all the feudal power of France.‖ At that period, and for nearly a century before, it had engrossed the commerce of the south of Europe, and its private

* Gibbon's Rome, iii. 88 and 93.
† Wealth of Nations, iii. 340.
‡ Jomini Vie de Napoleon, i. 484.
§ Porter's Prog. ii. 290.
‖ Sismondi, xii. 168.

merchants numbered all the Governments of Europe among their debtors.* Pisa at a still earlier period contained 140,000 inhabitants, whereas its population is now reduced to 17,000.† When the rival fleets of Genoa and Pisa fought at La Meloria, in 1284, each bore as many sailors as manned the English and French fleets at Trafalgar, and 11,000 of the vanquished party were carried off to the Genoese prisons.‡ Venice at one period numbered 43,000 sailors in her fleet, whereas the whole population capable of bearing arms does not now amount to nearly that number. The immense extent of the buildings in most of the towns of Tuscany, as Sienna, Pistoia, &c. which are now hardly inhabited, prove how great the numbers of their inhabitants were in former, compared to what they are in modern times. The latter of these cities formerly contained 40,000 souls; at present it hardly possesses 8000.§

It is, notwithstanding this extraordinary decline in the Italian manufacturing towns, well worthy of observation, that the productive powers of the soil not only have undergone no diminution, but that such has been the rapid increase of the surplus produce of the Italian agriculturists, that it has more than compensated the whole decay of their manufacturing industry. "Notwithstanding the great diminution of the population of the Italian *towns*," says Chateauvieux, ‖ "there is reason to believe not only that the inhabitants of Italy, upon *the whole*, have gone on progressively increasing during all this period, but that they are at this moment more numerous than they were at

* Villani, 824. † Hallam's Middle Ages, i. 454.
‡ Sismondi, iv. ii. § Chateauvieux, 82. ‖ Ibid. 300.

any former period of its history, not excepting the most flourishing days of the Roman Empire. The population of Tuscany was calculated about the year 1780 at 1,000,000; it is now considerably above that number.* In Fruili the population, in 1581, was 196,546; in 1755, it contained 342,158 inhabitants. In the district of Padua there were, in 1760, 240,366 souls; in 1781, 288,300. In short, if many parts of Italy are not now so populous as they were during the flourishing times of her Republics, the deficiency is more than compensated by the great agricultural increase in other districts; or at least, that increase has advanced rapidly during the last hundred years, to fill the blanks occasioned by the commercial decline and political changes of the sixteenth century.

The cause of this remarkable decrease among the inhabitants of the great towns, and increase in the agricultural population, is to be found in the entire decay of mercantile and manufacturing industry which followed the changes in the channels of commerce, and the establishment of the Spanish dominion over the whole country, in the early part of the sixteenth century.† The wealth of all the commercial cities was in consequence turned to the purchase of land, the only remaining employment in which it could find any profit; and so universal was the transference, that, before the close of the sixteenth century, the commercial was everywhere converted into a landed aristocracy. So large a proportion of the people has, since the loss of Italian independence, been directed to rural pursuits, that it is now calculated at fifteen out of the nineteen millions of which her population consists.‡

In truth, the same causes which lead to extrava-

* Paoletti, 58. † Sismondi, xvi. 158. ‡ Chateauvieux, 84, 293.

gance in individuals, when they become opulent, produce the same effect upon nations when their resources are abundant. The power of borrowing money with facility is the cause of the almost universal embarrassments in which the landed proprietors of every rich country are involved; a danger from which the industrious classes are in a great measure removed by the want of credit, which restricts their expenditure to their income. The same cause produces the public debt of all long established governments of wealthy communities. In the vicissitudes of human affairs, emergencies frequently occur when it is difficult to avoid war, and when the public voice irresistibly urges them to commence it. When this happens, the immense *immediate* advantage of raising supplies without materially augmenting the taxes of the country, inevitably leads to the contraction of loans, which prove an extreme burden when the excitation of the moment has subsided, and the lasting obligation only remains. But, as in private life, each succeeding generation falls into the same errors with that which preceded it, without paying the smallest regard to the lessons of experience: so in public affairs, the deductions of political experience are forgotten when new combinations arise, and the impulse of other passions is felt. It is unjust to lay this to the charge of governments only: in such measures they are cordially seconded by their subjects, and by none more than in free states, whose inhabitants are always inclined to shift the expense of hostilities as much as possible from their own shoulders on those of posterity. In truth, the passion for war, and the excitation arising from its prosecution, produces as important effects in civilized as in ruder times: and is one of the great out-

lets by which the superfluous wealth of opulent states is drawn off, and a limitation provided to the demand for labour in the later stages of society.

The wasteful expenditure of government in opulent states, produces this effect not only by the immediate consumption of capital which it occasions, but by the permanent burden which it affixes to the price of subsistence and the wages of labour. During the period of its expenditure, it raises the price of every article either of necessity and convenience, and consequently elevates the money wages of the labouring classes: after it has ceased, it produces the same effect by the continual exaction of taxes to pay the interest of the loan contracted to meet it. Thus the effect of such expenditure on the part of government is more powerful than if the same sum had been squandered by individuals; in the one case the capital only is lost, in the other, in addition to that effect, an annual burden created.

When the price of provisions, and the money wages of labour, are in this manner permanently raised by the profuse expenditure of individuals and government in a rich country, by the depreciation in the value of the circulating medium which arises from the extended issues of paper, and the abundance of the precious metals springing from the necessities of an extended commerce, and by the burdens which taxes and public debts have fixed upon the industry of the people, a most important limitation to the demand for labour is created. Importation both of the necessaries of life, and of many of its conveniences, is encouraged by the difference between the cost at which they can be raised abroad and at home. Exportation is checked by the high rate of labour, and the consequent diffe-

rence of price between domestic and foreign commodities. Where the wages of labour are raised by the permanent elevation of the price of the necessaries of life, an immediate and inevitable check is given to the extension of its demand; and that equally whether the ingenuity of man overcomes the disadvantage or not. In the one case, foreign industry obtains the preference to domestic—in the other, it is equally superseded by the application of mechanical contrivance.

Of the reality of this most powerful check upon the demand for labour, and consequent increase of mankind in the later stages of society, the British empire at this time affords the most striking illustration. Ever since the peace of 1814 exposed the British manufacturers to the galling competition of foreign industry, the most incessant and apparently well-grounded complaints have been made by our manufacturers, that they are unable to withstand the competition of other states, in which subsistence can be acquired with greater ease, and the remuneration of workmen is cheaper. The difference in the money wages of labour paid in these islands and on the Continent of Europe is prodigious; the table quoted in the note* shews, that the sums paid in some of these states to labourers, are not a fourth of what are paid

* Mr Greig of Manchester states the price of "continental labour" to be as follows:

France,	5s. 8d.	per week of	72 hours.
Switzerland,	4s. 5d.	do.	82 do.
Austria,	4s. 0d.	do.	76 do.
Tyrol,	3s. 9d.	do.	88 do.
Saxony,	3s. 6d.	do.	72 do.
Bonn on the Rhine,	2s. 6d.	do.	84 do.;

being an average of 3s. 11¾d. per week of 79 hours. The same gentleman states the existing wages of Englishmen to range from 10s. to 30s. a week.

to the same class in this country. When matters have come to this point, one or other of two alternatives must take place: either the foreign market for the manufactures of the country, so overburdened with the plenty, and, consequently, low value of money, must be entirely lost, and its home artisans exposed to the ruinous competition of foreign industry even in the supply of their own country; or the increased cost of production must be compensated by the enlarged and more skilful use of machinery. In either case the effect is the same; the demand of labour in the old and opulent state is either altogether checked or materially retarded by the substitution of machinery, on a great scale, for the workmanship of the human hand.

IV. These considerations lead to another most important limitation to the demand for labour, in the later stages of society, arising from the *division of labour*, and the inventions and improvement of *machinery*.

In simple times, and in agricultural states, almost every article, whether of subsistence or accommodation, is produced by human labour. Not only is the produce of the fields raised and converted into the form required for subsistence by the toil of the husbandman, but the manufactures which are exchanged for his surplus produce are wrought into various forms by the manual labour of the artisan. The greatest works which the world has ever witnessed, the pyramids of Egypt, the wall of China, the Cyclopean piles, the Roman highways, were formed by the unaided efforts of human strength; and it was the unlimited power of commanding such exertions, which enabled the government of these countries to accomplish these stupendous undertakings. The various

operations of baking, brewing, building, and making clothing, were in early times carried on by the agricultural labourers themselves, and in many parts of the world this primitive custom still continues. As this combination of employments is unavoidable before the separation of professions, and the growth of cities, so it is the state where the greatest possible encouragement is afforded to industry, because the whole operations required by society are accomplished by the human hand.

If this state of things had continued after capital had begun to accumulate, and the demand for labour had increased with the extension of the wants of men, the most dangerous consequences to public prosperity must have ensued. If the same amount of labour were requisite to provide the articles of necessity and convenience, in the later as the earlier stages of society, it is impossible to say how soon every state would have arrived at the limits of its increase. The whole encouragement arising from the extension of the wealth and numbers of mankind, being brought to bear directly upon the demand for labour, population would advance with too rapid strides, and society would arrive at a stationary condition before the limitations provided to the principle of increase could be developed. Fortunately this can never occur, in consequence of the operation of causes which begin to be felt even before their effects are required in the world.

Coëval with the birth of society, there spring up a succession of causes which retard the effect of an increasing desire for the productions of industry, and operate with increasing force as mankind approach a stationary condition.

The separation of professions which arises so early

in the progress of mankind, is the first circumstance which limits the effect of increasing wealth on the demand for labour. The division of employment is soon found to facilitate every species of industry: the advantages of an undivided attention to a particular pursuit are so great as to force themselves upon the attention of men in an early period of civilization. The consequence of this change is, to prevent the increase in the demand for the productions of human industry from giving the same impulse to population, which it would have done, if no such cause had interfered to intercept its effects. If ten men are enabled, from the separation of employments, to do the work of twenty, it is quite clear that the encouragement to population arising from the augmented vent for its produce, is reduced to one-half of what it otherwise would have been. It is this cause which is felt with such severity at that stage of improvement, when the division of labour is applied to agricultural pursuits; and when the soil, instead of being cultivated by a numerous body of small tenants, who carry on all the rude manufactures which they require in their own cottages, is engrossed by a smaller number of great farmers, who conduct agriculture on an improved system, and purchase from others all the manufactured articles which they require. The immediate consequence of such a change is the depopulation of the country, and the augmentation of cities. This effect was experienced in England in the whole of the last century, during which the complaints of political writers on the decrease of the rural population, and the engrossing of farms, were incessant;* and it has been recently felt with still

* Price and others.

greater severity in the Highlands of Scotland, where no manufacturing cities were at hand to give employment to the numerous agricultural labourers whom the engrossing of farms, and the introduction of sheep-farming left without occupation, and who have been driven to the wilds of America, in search of that subsistence which was denied them in their native soil.*

In the progress of improvement the division of labour comes to operate not less powerfully upon the manufacturing classes. It is hardly possible to estimate the reduction, which the simple division of employment, without the addition of any machinery, makes in the quantity of human labour required in many branches of industry. "A common smith," says Mr Smith, "who, though accustomed to handle the hammer, has never been used to make nails, can scarce make above two or three hundred nails a-day, and those, too, very bad ones. A smith whose sole occupation is not making nails can seldom with the utmost diligence make more than 800 or 1000 daily. I have seen several boys under twenty years of age, who had never exercised any other trade than that of making nails, who could make each of them 2300 nails a-day."†

The effects of the separation of employments in increasing the quantity of produce which a given number of agricultural labourers can raise from the soil, is not less remarkable. From the saving of time, and the increased skill which attends the prosecution of a single pursuit, the quantity of subsistence which the same number of labourers are able to raise from the

* Lord Selkirk on Highland Emigration, p. 12, 37.

† Wealth of Nations, i. 12.

earth is more than doubled. This separation has been carried much farther in Britain than France, in consequence of the extent of its manufactures, and the rapid improvement of its agriculture. Accordingly it is ascertained, as already noticed, that in France *twenty* millions of agricultural labourers maintain themselves, and raise food for *ten* millions of manufacturers or artisans, and other classes, whereas in England, *four* millions of agricultural labourers not only support themselves and their families, but raise sufficient food for about fifteen millions of the commercial and manufacturing classes.* If the same proportion existed in France, the population would be nearly one hundred millions, of whom seventy-five millions would be maintained by the twenty millions who now cultivate its soil.

It has been fully demonstrated in the wealth of nations,† that the division of labour is regulated by the extent of the market; that it prevails in a very slight degree in the rude periods of society, and is gradually increased and brought to perfection, with the extension of commerce and the progress of opulence. This limitation, therefore, upon the demand for labour, like all the others which are provided by nature, is called into activity when the circumstances of society require its operation. It is not felt till that period has arrived when an unlimited increase in the demand for labour might be attended with dangerous effects to the future welfare of the species.

It is not unusual, indeed, to hear it stated, that the division of labour is the cause of an *increased* demand for its productions, by opening a market for domestic

* Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 59.

† Wealth of Nations, i. 26.

industry in foreign states: and there can be no doubt that the export sale of manufactures is increased by every thing which lessens the cost of their production at home. But this enlarged demand is the consequence of the diminution of labour which has been effected by the separation of employment, and it only increases with the progress of that decrease. We must not estimate the effect of such a demand upon the progress of population, therefore, by its effect upon the productions of human industry, or upon the amount of manufacturing opulence. It owes its existence to the saving of human labour which has been effected, and ceases to extend when that saving has been carried to its utmost extent. Whatever, therefore, may be the additions to national wealth or to the produce of national industry, which may be effected by the application of the division of labour to manufacturing industry, its effect upon the increase of population is much less considerable; and that direct impulse to the multiplication of the species, which the demand for manufactures affords in the early periods of society, is sensibly weakened in its later stages.

With the division of labour there springs up the *invention and improvement of machinery*, which comes in the progress of wealth to have the most important effects upon the demand for labour. The application of machinery to manufactures is early perceived to be an advantage; but it is the pressure of taxes, and the high money price of labour, which set human ingenuity at work to improve the powers thus acquired. Without such assistance the manufacturer finds himself unable to withstand the competition of states where the money wages of labour are lower, and the farmer to meet the foreign grower in the supply

of the home market. Necessity, the mother of invention, overcomes this disadvantage by the machinery which improved art produces, and the ingenuity which mechanical knowledge developes. To such improvements no limit can be assigned. With the progress of science, and the extensions of art, the substitution of machinery for human labour is carried to an inconceivable extent. The steam-engine, the cotton machinery of Sir R. Arkwright, the steam-power looms, have totally altered the relative situation of the British and foreign manufacturers; and enabled the former, notwithstanding the heavy burdens with which they had to contend, to undersell great part of foreign artists, even in the supply of their own markets. The cotton manufactures exported at this moment amount to L. 34,000,000 yearly: but for the machinery employed they would not exist.* The cottons of India, transported to this country, and wrought into muslins by the steam-power looms of Manchester and Glasgow, are able to undersell the native artisans of Hindostan, who work for a penny a-day, even in the supply of the Indian market. The freight of the cotton from India to Britain; the expense of manufacturing the rude article in this country, where wages are twenty times as high as in Hindostan; the freight back to the Indian market, all are compensated by the diminution of human labour which the application of machinery produces.

It is hardly possible to estimate the effect of this substitution of machinery for human labour on the progress of population, in the opulent and advanced stages of society. It pervades every branch of industry, and operates with increasing force as the growth

* M'Culloch's Statistics of British Empire, i. 656.

of wealth raises the money wages of labour, by affecting the price of subsistence. It has been calculated by experienced persons, that, if the whole cotton manufactures of Great Britain were wrought by the human hand, without the assistance of machinery, they would require two hundred millions of labourers:* whereas hardly 800,000 are at present employed in that manufacture. The same diminution in the demand for labour arises from the extension of machinery in a greater or less degree to every branch of industry. The application of the steam-engine to the navigation of vessels at sea; the discovery of the mode of working silk by machinery; the substitution of the thrashing-machine for manual labour in agriculture; the formation of woollen cloth by mechanical contrivance, are a few of the instances in which the same effect has taken place. The common complaint, that the extension of our exports produces no corresponding elevation in the wages of manufacturing industry, proves how powerfully this principle operates in intercepting the encouragement which otherwise would affect the progress of our population. The exports of Great Britain to all parts of the world, on an average of seven years ending 1806, were L. 23,000,000: on an average of seven years ending 1836, they were L.74,000,000. The population of the island at the first period was 10,942,000; at the last it was 18,000,000.† This remarkable difference demonstrates how powerfully the principles which have

* "Each workman now does or rather superintends as much work as would have been done by 200 or 300 sixty years ago. As much work is done by a steam power mill with 750 men as 200,000 could do without machinery."—M'Culloch, i. 648.

† Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 11, and ii. 98, and Rise and Progress of Cotton Manufacture, 243.

now been developed have interfered, during this period, between the augmentation of the produce of industry, and the actual multiplication of the labourers.

It is the perception of this fact which renders these improvements in machinery so great an object of jealousy to the manufacturing classes, and gives rise to so many dissensions between them and their employers, in seasons of public distress. Nothing can be more mistaken, however, than the idea which they entertain, that, if they could only get quit of the obnoxious engines, the demand for the produce of their industry would be wholly felt by the working-classes. If the machinery of Britain were destroyed, the export of its manufactures would almost entirely cease. The saving of expense produced by its use alone enables our manufacturers to counteract the high price of labour and the weight of taxes, and to compete with strangers in the supply of the foreign market. But for these advantages, they would be unable to retain the supply of their own people. So far from machinery, therefore, being really hurtful to British industry, it alone enables our labours to maintain their ground against the exertions of rival states. It is the operation of a law of Nature, destined to restrain the demand for labour in the advanced stages of society, which really is felt by the British operatives; and this law, in its effect on population, no human exertions are able to avoid; for its influence upon the price of the produce of industry can be avoided only by effecting a diminution in the number of hands employed in the working up of highly wrought articles.

It is probable, that, whatever extension the exportation of our manufactures may receive in future years,

there will be no corresponding increase in the number of our operative workmen. They may possibly not be able to maintain their present numbers. Human ingenuity will daily extend the application of machinery to the different branches of industry, and the produce of the national labour will be augmented without a proportional increase in the number of its working-classes. Judging from the past, there is no reason to believe that mechanical improvement has reached its final limit. It appears rather commencing a career to which imagination itself can affix no termination.

To the friends of mankind, there is no change in the destinies of the species, which is a fitter subject for congratulation than that which has now been considered. Of all the effects which the progress of civilisation produces, there is none so deplorable as the degradation of the human character which arises from the habits of the manufacturing classes. The assemblage of large bodies of men in one place; the close confinement to which they are subjected; the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes at an early period of life; and the debasement of intellect which arises from uniformity of occupation, all conspire to degrade and corrupt mankind. Persons unacquainted with the manners of the lower orders in the great manufacturing cities of Britain, can form no adequate conception of the habits which prevail among them. In Glasgow, at this moment, (1840,) there are three thousand public-houses among 290,000 persons included in 58,000 families; being nearly *one public-house for every twenty families.* The number of inhabited houses is about 30,000; so that every *tenth* house is appropriated to the sale of spirits: a propor-

tion unexampled, it is believed, in any other city of the globe.* This number has risen from 1600 since the year 1821, though not more than 140,000 souls have been, during the same period, added to the population.† Seasons of adversity lead to no improvement in the habits of these workmen; the recurrence of prosperity brings with it the usual attendants of profligacy and intemperance. Ten or twenty thousand workmen are more or less intoxicated every Saturday, and for the most of Sunday; every farthing which can be spared is too often converted into ardent spirits. The same individuals who, a year before, were reduced to pawn their last shreds of furniture to procure subsistence, recklessly throw away the surplus earnings of more prosperous times in the lowest debauchery. The warnings of religion, the dictates of prudence, the means of instruction, the lessons of adversity, are alike overwhelmed by the passion for momentary gratification. It seems the peculiar effect of such debasing employments, to render the condition of men precarious at the same time that it makes their habits irregular: to subject them at once to the most trying fluctuations of condition, and the most fatal improvidence of character.

The prevalence of such habits is in the highest degree dangerous to the increase of mankind. Nothing more ruinous to public welfare can be imagined than the existence of a large body of men in the state, whose employment is uncertain, while their passions

* In 1830 there was, in the whole of Glasgow, 1 spirit shop for every 12 houses: now it is 1 in 10.—Cleland's folio Statistics of Glasgow, 261, 263. There are about 1250 spirit shops in the royalty, and 1800 in the suburban districts, within the Parliamentary limits.

† Cleland's Statistics of Glasgow in 1840, p. 11.

are uncontrolled: whose increase, like that of the lower animals, is wholly uninfluenced by the dictates of reason, and who are steady in nothing but the indulgence of desire. Experience has proved accordingly, that the proportion of marriages in these classes is much greater than in the agricultural districts; and the increase of population is still more rapid, as the dissolution of manners has multiplied to an incredible degree the number of bastards.* To this cause, joined to the excessive augmentation of the Irish poor, is to be ascribed the rapid rate of increase, at present perceptible in the population of the British isles, a proportion greater, with the exception of Prussia, than in any other of the European states. The tendency to over increase is confined to these two classes; in the middling ranks, and in the agricultural districts, it is unknown.

The substitution, therefore, of steam-power looms for manual labour, of mechanical contrivance for human multiplication, is a most fortunate change in the progress of society, and more particularly to be desired in a country such as Britain, whose political greatness is intimately connected with its manufacturing superiority. Such improvements are not only necessary to counteract the effect of the depreciation in the value of money, and consequent rise in the money wages of labour which follows a state of commercial prosperity, but highly beneficial in thinning the ranks of the manufacturing classes, and preventing that undue multiplication of their numbers from which the most dangerous consequences may be anticipated. What would have been the state of this island if its exports had reached L. 105,000,000 Sterling, *without* the aid of the

* Parliamentary Report on the Public Distress, 1828.

cotton machinery of Sir R. Arkwright, or the steam-looms of more recent times? From so perilous a prospect we are for ever secured by the important law of nature, which has provided that, in periods of commercial prosperity, the causes of restraint can be counteracted only by the *diminution* of human labour, and that the extension of the market for the objects of manufacturing industry, can be attained by no other means than the decrease in the persons engaged in its production.

The difference in this respect between the effect of the progress of society upon agriculture and manufactures is in the highest degree important. It has been often observed, that while mechanical contrivance appears susceptible of application to an indefinite extent to manufacturing industry, it is hardly available in the cultivation of the earth. By superior skill in cultivation, indeed, the produce which the same exertion of human strength can raise from the soil is greatly augmented: but the principal operations of husbandry still continue to be conducted by manual exertion. With the exception of the thrashing-machine, which is not, strictly speaking, applied to the raising of food, but to its manufacture when raised, mechanical contrivance has done little to abridge the labour of man in agriculture. The fundamental operations of clearing, draining, manuring, ploughing, cleaning, and reaping, are still performed by the human hand, and to all appearance must always continue to be done so. The extent of the field on which agricultural labour must be performed prevents the application of the mechanical contrivance which is so powerful in manufactures; its uneven surface precludes the operation of the powers which are employed in navigation, or manufacturing

machinery. The implements of husbandry, indeed, may be improved, and the skill which directs them increased; but the power which wields them will never be different: and while the improvement of science and the extension of art is daily encroaching on the field of industry in the often-debasing employments of manufactures, the wide and healthful field of agricultural occupation remains for ever open to the industry of mankind.

The improvement of husbandry, indeed, has a directly opposite tendency from the growth of manufactures, and in the later ages of society the number of persons employed in the cultivation of the earth is greater than in its earlier periods. Where agriculture has attained to a high degree of perfection, as in Flanders, Lombardy, and Tuscany, the value of land, and the great demand for its varied produce, leads to the rotation of crops, and the garden system of husbandry. This change augments immensely the number of persons engaged in its cultivation. It has been calculated, that at least double the number of labourers are occupied on a farm of equal extent in the level fields of Brabant, or on the sunny slopes of the Apennines, from those deemed necessary in the best cultivated parts of Britain. The growth of agricultural wealth leads to the division of farms; the improvement of agricultural knowledge multiplies the number of crops which can be raised from the soil, the necessity for economising both space and labour introduces the garden cultivation. By no possible contrivance can the same produce be raised from good land, as by treating it like a kitchen garden with the spade and the hoe; and this is accordingly the method adopted in those countries where agriculture has been longest practised with success, and is

best understood;* an extraordinary fact, indicating both the powerful law of nature which binds man to his first and best employment, and the ample provision made for extending this delightful branch of industry in the later stages of society.

The redundant population of Ireland is now the subject of general and deserved alarm in this country. Yet Ireland contains nearly 17,000,000† of arable acres, and its population does not exceed 8,000,000 souls. If we allow one arable acre for the subsistence of each individual, it follows that Ireland, *from its agriculture alone*, is capable of maintaining more than double its present inhabitants, even on the best wheaten bread, and triple that number if fed on potatoes. There can be no doubt, that between grain crops, potatoes, and green crops, forming with them a proper rotation of husbandry, as much solid nourishment as can be drawn from two quarters of grain an acre might with ease be permanently raised at an average from the fertile soil of Ireland. In Scotland, farmers, in districts where agriculture is in a prosperous state, have no objections to the produce of their land being calculated at four or even five quarters an arable acre; and the average of all England is above two and a-half.‡ If a quarter of grain is adequate maintenance for a human being on an average for a year, then 17,000,000 acres would, at this rate, if all directed to the raising of human food, maintain *thirty-four millions* yearly, or about four times its present population.

Were the garden system of husbandry universally

* Lombardy, Venice, Flanders, Darmstadt, &c.

† Cowling's Survey of the Empire. Fourth Report on Irish Bogs, p. 11, and Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. p. 177.

‡ M'Culloch's Stat. Ac. of England, i. 476.

introduced, it may safely be affirmed that this great increase of numbers would find ample employment in the cultivation of the soil, and in the manufactures whom the surplus produce of the agricultural labourers would both employ and maintain. This consideration may tend to allay the alarm so generally felt as to the *impossibility* of finding food for mankind in the later stages of society in these islands, and clearly show that the miserable condition of the Irish poor is rather the result of those political circumstances which prevent industry from availing itself of the bounty of nature, than of any laws essentially inherent in the human condition. Scotland contains about 5,000,000 arable acres, and its population is 2,500,000. Yet Scotland, so far from importing food, annually exports great quantities of grain to the British metropolis. The proportion of the existing population to the means of subsistence is *much greater*, therefore, in Scotland than in Ireland; yet how different is the condition of the people in the two countries! And can there be any doubt that, if the garden system of husbandry were universally introduced, the rural population of Scotland might be tripled without the smallest diminution of their comforts?

"The banks of the lake of Zurich," says Coxe, "for the *density* of the population, and the *well-being of the peasantry*, are not surpassed by any spot on the habitable globe. In many places there is hardly an *acre and a quarter* to each individual." * The sloping hills of the Pays de Vaud are cultivated in small garden enclosures, and the comfort and opulence of the people excite the admiration of every traveller. †

* Coxe's Switzerland, i. 104.

† Baron de Stael, 97.

In the rich plains of Flanders, equally as in the sunny slopes of Bearn,* in the beautiful vale of the Arno, † not less than the terraced hills of Tuscany, ‡ the smiling aspect of the country, which resembles *a great garden*, and the happiness of the people, are alike conspicuous. § It was for no light reasons, therefore, that nature established this eternal distinction between the labour of the country and that of the town, and made the increase of wealth and progress of civilisation attended with constant restraints on the encouragement to labour, from manufacturing, and constant increase to the demand for industry or agricultural employments; and the philosopher who contrasts the condition of mankind in a manufacturing city and a rural district, will feel additional gratitude for that beneficent law which, while it renders the progress of knowledge and the growth of opulence the means of checking the increase of the former, has opened a boundless field for the maintenance and employment of the human race in the progressive improvement of the latter.

V. Independent of the limitations to the demand for labour, which are developed in the progress of society, there are another set of causes gradually brought into operation, which prevents the human species from ever reaching the limits assigned to their farther increase, by the exhaustion of their means of subsistence.

1. In the progress of opulence, the increase of *horses* for the purposes of luxury, or the conveyance of

* Young's France, i. 42. Swineburne, iii. 108, 312.
† Sismondi's Italy, 109, 110. ‡ Chateauvieux, p. 302. § Ibid. 302.

persons and property from one part of the country to another, produces a most important effect upon the consumption of the nation. Each horse requires as much food as *eight persons*; that is to say, a million of horses consume as much as eight millions of individuals. When we reflect on the prodigious number of these noble animals in opulent and civilized states, which are maintained for the indulgence or necessities of the higher orders; for the conducting of inland commerce, or for the purposes of agriculture, the share of the national subsistence which is devoted to their support must appear very great. In the expedition to Russia it is calculated that Napoleon lost 200,000 horses, and France contains 2,500,000.* The horses of Great Britain and Ireland are stated by Colquhoun at 1,800,000, and the value of the produce consumed by them at L.16,200,000.† It is computed that 40,000 vehicles leave London every day; and supposing that each, at an average, is drawn by three horses, it follows that 120,000 of these animals are daily employed on the roads in and around the métropolis. From the most accurate accounts which can be obtained there seems no reason to doubt that the horses of the capital consume as much food as its inhabitants,‡ and the same is probably true of most other towns in the kingdom. There are few farmers in Britain that are not possessed of two or three horses, which require as much food as 16 or 24 persons; and the numbers employed in agriculture are 832,000:§

* Guillaume de Vaudoncourt, Campagne de 1812, i. 52; and Dupin, Force Com. 106.

† Colquhoun, p. 89. Wealth and Power of Great Britain.

‡ Colquhoun on the Police of the Metropolis, p. 37.

§ Parl. Return, 1821. Porter's Progress, i. 185.

the total number on which duty was paid in 1821 was 1,326,553, which consume the food of nearly eleven millions of men; a convincing proof that the human labourers employed in agriculture do not consume nearly so much of the fruits of the earth as their fellow-labourers in the plough.

This encroachment of animal consumers upon the fruits of the earth, gradually increases with the progress of commercial opulence. In the ruder periods of society, the greater part of the operations of agriculture are performed by the human hand, and neither the habits of the higher orders, nor the necessities of commerce, require a great number of horses for the service of the other classes. But with the extension of commerce, and the growth of opulence, a very different state of things is introduced. Agriculture conducted on a great scale, and by persons possessed of large capital, is in great part performed by the exertions of these powerful animals; commerce, widely extended, and calculated for the wants of a luxurious age, requires an immense supply to conduct the internal communication of the state; wealth, insatiable in the desires which it produces, is perpetually suggesting additional display to eclipse the equipages of the industrious classes. The multiplication of horses thus goes on at an increased ratio in the advanced stages of such opulent societies; and an animal which at first is valued only for its useful qualities, and as the fellow-labourer of its master, becomes in the progress of opulence, the most costly article of luxury, and the principal sign of the distinction of rank.

2. With the increase of wealth a change not less

important in its consequences takes place in the FOOD, which is consumed by the better classes of society. The homely fare of their predecessors is gradually abandoned when an advanced rate of wages puts a superior subsistence within their reach; butcher-meat, butter and cheese come to constitute a principal part of the food of the poor, and a large portion of the land of the state is devoted to the production of these costly articles of subsistence. Generally speaking, it will be found that this change takes place to the greatest degree in the advanced stages of society. In particular situations, indeed, such as North America, where an extraordinary demand for labour, and an unparalleled combination of political circumstances, have given to the labouring classes in early periods the advantages and powers of civilized life, the consumption of animal food by the lower orders, even in the outset of their progress, is very great. But, generally speaking, an increase of wealth in the middling and lower ranks is essential to the general adoption of that luxury by the working classes; for this plain reason, that, until they are comfortable in their circumstances, they are unable to purchase it. In the infancy of society animal food is generally used, because it is easily procured by the chace, or the labours of pastoral life; but after society has assumed a settled form, and the permanent labours of agriculture have commenced, it is the spread of opulence that alone can restore it to the working orders. Mr Young accordingly observes, that the labouring classes in France are 76 per cent. worse clothed, fed, and lodged* than their brethren in this country; and it is a remarkable fact, that, with the increase of agri-

* Young's France, i. p. 399–401.

cultural wealth in the former country since the Revolution, a corresponding change in the diet of the peasantry has taken place.* Notwithstanding this change, however, it is calculated by the latest political writer on the two countries, that the quantity of butcher-meat, butter and cheese consumed in Britain is 50 *per cent.* greater than in France.† A comparison of the food of the poorer classes in Poland, where the peasantry live entirely on inferior grain, while their splendid harvests of wheat are transported untouched to the London market,‡ with that which is consumed by the same classes in Sweden§ or Switzerland,‖ where ages of comparative freedom have diffused opulence through the rural population; or of that in daily use among the Irish poor with that which for ages has subsisted among the opulent yeomanry of England, is sufficient to demonstrate the truth of these observations.

But it is not so much by its effect in changing the habitual food of the working classes that the growth of public wealth affects the general consumption of the state. A still more important consequence results from the multiplication of the middling ranks, and the improved standard of subsistence to which they are habituated. In countries such as Britain, Flanders, or America, where the middle classes are numerous and wealthy, the costly species of food consumed by them influences, in a most important degree, the proportion between the subsisting population, and the food required for their support. The increase of

* Baron de Stael, 81.

† Dupin's Force Commerciale de France, i. 103–109.

‡ Jacob's Report. § Clarke's Travels, i. 204. ‖ Coxe, i. 104.

opulence, and the stability of Government, by augmenting the wealth which prevails among these ranks, enlarges the circle of those to whom many of the luxuries of life have become articles of necessity, and extends in a similar degree the quantity of land required for their support. The immense tracts of arable land devoted in the British islands to pasturage, for the supply of the markets of the kingdom with butcher-meat, butter, cheese, or other luxuries, amounting to no less than 27,386,000 acres, while the whole land under tillage is only 19,135,000,* demonstrate the important effect which this change produces on the relation between the numbers of the people and the means of maintaining them. There can be no doubt, that if the food of the middling and lower orders were to be restricted to millet or rye-bread, as in Poland, or to potatoes, as in Ireland, at least double the population might be maintained from the same extent of land which is required under the costly system of subsistence which universally prevails in this country. It has been observed, that the paupers of England are better fed than the labouring poor of the continental states:† it may be safely affirmed that, in every gradation of rank above the workhouse, the difference is still more remarkable.

3. The absorption of a considerable portion of grain for the purposes of *distillation* and *brewing*, and the vast increase in the consumption of fermented liquors and ardent spirits in the later stages of society, from the augmentation both of population and wealth, is an-

* Cowling's Report to Emigration Committee, p. 1828. Report on Irish Bogs, p. 11.

† Jacob's Report.

other circumstance which tends in a most material degree to affect the proportion between the number of the people and the amount of the national subsistence.

The passion for spirituous liquors is universally inherent in the species, but it is only in the advanced stages of society that the quantity of grain consumed in this form becomes an important element in estimating the means of national subsistence. It is difficult to estimate the quantity of the agricultural produce of Britain, which is consumed in brewing and distillation; but it unquestionably is very great. From the official return, it appears that the number of gallons of spirituous liquors distilled in the island has increased, since the reduction of the duties in 1825, from 16,000,000 to 24,493,000:* a prodigious rise in so short a period, and amply sufficient to account for the great increase in crime which has taken place during the same period, almost the whole of which is directly or indirectly to be ascribed to the excessive use of ardent spirits. It has uniformly been found accordingly, that the stoppage of distillation from grain in periods of scarcity has had an immediate and considerable effect on the price of provisions. If to this great consumption of grain in distillation is added the immense quantities required for the manufacture of ale, porter, and small beer, in northern climates, or of wine and oil in southern latitudes, it may easily be conceived what a large proportion of the produce of the soil comes to be required, in the progress of society, for this object. The effect is easily discernible in the operations of agriculture; a considerable por-

* Porter's Parliamentary Returns, 1837, p. 27.

tion of which is devoted in this country to those species of grain which are required only in the formation of fermented liquors, and in the south of Europe to the cultivation of the olive and the vine.*

* Mr Colquhoun (p. 89,) states the proportion between the grain in the British isles, consumed by man and that required by animals, and for the purpose of brewing as follows:

Consumed by man,	18,750,000 Quarters.
animals,	11,829,000
In brewing and distillation,	4,250,000

It thus appears that the grain consumed by the human species is little more than that which is devoted to the maintenance of animals or the purposes of luxury: and if the grass consumed by animals be taken into the account, it will clearly appear that little more than ONE-THIRD of the whole produce of the soil in the British isles goes directly to the purposes of human subsistence. He calculates (p. 89,) the value of the *grass, hay, and straw* annually consumed in the united kingdom at L. 89,000,000

Turnips,	14,200,000
Oats for animals,	17,000,000
Total for animals,	L. 120,200,000

And the value of the produce consumed by the human race directly stands thus:

Wheat,	9,170,000 quarters,	L. 32,300,000
Barley,	6,335,000	11,720,000
Oats for man,	5,000,000	7,200,000
Potatoes,		15,900,000
Garden stuffs, beans, &c. orchards,		2,800,000
		L. 70,020,000

It thus appears, that while the value of the agricultural produce consumed by animals is L. 120,000,000, that required by man is only L. 70,000,000: in other words, the subsistence raised for man throughout the empire is little more than *half the amount* of that required for the animals of which he makes use.

It is no doubt true, that a large proportion of the animals which thus consume nearly *two-thirds* of the agricultural produce of the empire are destined for human consumption, and minister either directly or indirectly to the comfort or luxury of the inhabitants. But that is precisely the circumstance which renders this limitation to the increase of the species so important. The increasing wants of men in

The causes which have now been mentioned produce the most important effects in the progress of society, by absorbing a large portion of the fruits of the soil in the gratification of artificial wants, or in the display of luxury, and consequently preventing the human race from approaching the verge of human subsistence. The land devoted in wealthy states to raising butcher-meat or butter, to the maintenance of horses, to the production of wine or fermented and spirituous liquors, constitutes an immense reserved fund, which is both a resource in periods of scarcity, and a barrier to the increase of the species in the advanced stages of society. Famines are unknown where one-half of the agricultural produce of the state is devoted to objects of luxury: population is checked and importation begins, while a moiety only of the national subsistence is devoted to the support of mankind. A deficiency in the crop in China or Hindostan is immediately followed by a famine, and the destruction of a part of the poorer classes by actual want: in England it produces only a diminution in the number of horses, a stoppage of distillation from grain, and a general saving in the use of bread or animal food, by the poorer classes.

The single fact already noticed will demonstrate how powerful an influence these causes exert upon the demand for labour and the principle of population in civilized states. In France twenty millions of agriculturists are required to feed themselves and maintain ten millions of persons engaged in other pursuits:

a commercial and opulent age absorb two-thirds of the fruits of the soil: thereby rendering it totally impossible for the human race to approach the limits assigned to their increase.

while in Britain four millions employed in agriculture, not only raise food sufficient for their own support, but for that of fourteen millions employed in trade or manufactures, or the learned professions.* That is, in France *two* cultivators maintain between them *one* of the other classes: while in Britain *one* cultivator maintains nearly *four* of the same description of persons. In Poland, Russia, or other agricultural states, the proportion is fifteen or twenty agriculturists to one manufacturer. These facts demonstrate how great a proportion of the fruits of the earth comes to be available to the other classes of the state in the progress of society; and how much the number of persons employed in agriculture is diminished at the period when the productive powers of their labour become the greatest.

The effect of this remarkable tendency in human affairs is to raise the price of grain, and encourage importation long before mankind have reached the limits of human subsistence. When so large a proportion as one-half of the fruits of the soil is consumed in articles of luxury, the rent of land rises, and the price of agricultural labour is enhanced long before population has reached its utmost boundaries. Without entering upon the disputed question, whether the increase of rent and prices is the consequence of the cultivation of inferior soils arising from the increase

* Dupin, Force Commerciale de France, i. p. 3. There were in England in 1811, 978,000 families employed in agriculture, and 1,960,000 in trade and manufactures.—Census 1811. In 1831, the families employed in trade and manufactures were 2,433,041, and in agriculture, 961,134, evidently shewing how strongly the increased productive powers of agriculture in the later stages of society were coming to act upon the distribution of industry in the state.

of population, or whether the cultivation of inferior soils is itself produced by the rise of prices, and the increased value of agricultural produce springing from the progress of wealth, it may safely be assumed that these effects *take place together;* and that the extension of agriculture to remote situations and unfavourable districts always takes place *at the time* when the prices of its produce are high, and the rent of land considerable. In consequence of the causes which have been mentioned, these effects occur long *before* the numbers of the people have reached the limit of national subsistence, and while an ample fund *still exists* in the surplus labour of the agriculturists for the security and enjoyment of mankind. Importation of grain is thus encouraged at a time when the national territory is capable of maintaining double its inhabitants: the price of subsistence rises, and industry is compelled to seek the aid of machinery before any considerable progress has been made in the arts of refinement, or the least danger is to be apprehended from the increase of the species. So early in the system of Nature do the causes begin to operate which are destined to regulate the rate of human increase; and so beautifully has the wisdom of its Author provided, in the consequences of the multiplication of mankind, against the dangers with which it might be attended.

It was the universal complaint in Italy under the Roman emperors, that agriculture had decayed, and that the metropolis was reduced to depend on the harvests of Egypt and Lybia for its daily food.* The

* "Olim," says Tacitus, "ex Italia legionibus longinquas in provincias commeatus portabantur; nec ut nunc infecunditate laboratur: sed

diminution of its produce is stated by Columella * at *nine-tenths*, and by Varro† at *three-fourths* of what at one period was raised, and, allowing that these numbers are exaggerated, abundant evidence exists to prove that a most extraordinary defalcation had taken place. It appears from an authentic document, already mentioned, that in the reign of the Emperor Constantine, before any irruption of the barbarians into Italy, no less than 330,000 acres of the province of Campania had reverted to a state of nature, yet even then the principal supplies of the towns were drawn from Egypt. ‡ The threat of blockading the Tyber was the most effectual mode of coercing the Roman populace, and whenever it was carried into effect famine immediately ensued, not only in the metropolis, but in the Italian provinces. § The fields of Italy were almost entirely devoted to pasturage, and the old sturdy race of cultivators had become extinct. In consequence of the decline of agriculture the rural population decayed: the land of Italy in the later periods of the empire fell into the hands of a small number of families; ‖ and the conquest of the Goths was facilitated by the difficulty of raising military levies, not less than the want of courage in those who were brought into the field. ¶ It is impossible to doubt that the depression of agriculture and consequent decline in the rural population was occasioned by the wealth and gran-

Africam potius et Egyptum exercemus; navibus que et casibus vita populi Romani permissa est."—Tacitus, Annal. xii. 43. Gibbon, vi. 235.

* Columella. † Varro.

‡ Gibbon, iii. 87, viii. p. 162. § Ibid. Vol. vi. p. 235.

§ Pliny, lib. xviii. §. 7. Gibbon, vi. 236. Ammianus Marcellinus, l. xvi.

¶ Sismondi, Hist. de France, i. 16.

deur of the empire; by the fall in the value of the precious metals, which exposed the Italian cultivator to a ruinous competition with poorer states; and by the influence of excessive riches in increasing the proportion of the fruits of the soil which were devoted to purposes of luxury, instead of the maintenance of a free population. When the whole land of Italy came to be engrossed by seventeen hundred and sixty families,* who cultivated their estates by means of slaves,† it is not surprising that the rural population was destroyed. The race of freemen who subsisted by the produce of their own labour, and raised the fabric of the republic, could not be supplied by the enslaved dependants of their successors, who toiled for the luxuries of the imperial city.

The experienced necessity of protecting the agriculture of Britain from foreign competition, by means of fiscal duties, is another example of the operation of the same causes. It seems to be universally admitted, that some duties are now indispensable to counterbalance the weight of taxes, and the high money wages of labour; that is, to counteract the causes which naturally result from a state of opulence. If agriculture is to be at all protected, the argument of the anti-corn law advocates is, that it should be sacrificed to the interests of manufacturers. No human regulations, however, can prevent the operation of the laws of Nature. If the causes destined to restrain the progress of population have begun to operate, it is in vain to endeavour to withstand them. By duties on the importation of foreign grain the labours of the agricultural class may be sustained, but this can be done only at the expense of the manufac-

* Gibbon, Vol. v. p. 263. † Ibid. Vol. vi. p. 264.

turing. If these duties are effectual at all, they can operate only by maintaining the price of grain at a higher level than it would otherwise attain, that is, by raising the price of every species of manufacturing industry, and consequently imposing on those engaged in their production the necessity of counteracting this disadvantage by the extension and improvement of machinery.

In either case the effect is the same; viz. that a powerful restraint on the demand for labour is imposed: there is this difference only, that in the first case it operates on the industry of the cultivators,—in the last on the multiplication of the artisans.

The example of Great Britain during the last forty years, when commercial wealth and opulence have made such an extraordinary advance among all classes, might naturally be expected, if these principles are well founded, to afford a strong confirmation of them: while the well known and remarkable increase in the population, which, as more than once noticed, is proceeding at the extraordinary rate of doubling in forty-two years, may be thought to afford a decisive proof that these are overstrained, if not altogether unfounded. The observation is natural, and the example well worthy of consideration. And upon an examination it will be found, that, so far from warranting any conclusion adverse to these views, the instance of England affords them the strongest confirmation; and at the same time throws an important light on the real causes both to which the present elements of strength and weakness in the empire are to be ascribed.

If Great Britain were a monarchy, whose dominions were confined to the British islands, it might reasonably be expected that its long-continued com-

mercial prosperity and present state of overgrown opulence, should have led to the operation of the many causes which have been mentioned, calculated in the later stages of society to retard the action of the principle of increase. But though this is undoubtedly the condition of the British islands, it is far from being the uniform state of the British *empire*. That empire has planted colonies of vast extent and unparalleled prosperity in almost every quarter of the globe; and with them, or with the independent states who have been the first born of her greatness, she now maintains more than half the export trade in which she is engaged with all the countries of the world.* From an extraordinary series of maritime successes, and the glorious result of the late war, she has enjoyed for the last hundred and fifty years, almost undisputed maritime supremacy, and has hitherto contrived, with the single exception of the late North American revolt, to hold under her government all the parts of this stupendous colonial empire. It is here

* Total exports of Great Britain in 1836, L. 53,368,572;

Of which were to America,	L. 12,425,605
British Provinces of North America,	2,732,291
West Indies,	3,786,453
East Indies,	4,285,829
Cape of Good Hope,	482,000
Australian Colonies,	1,180,000
Malta,	143,000
Gibraltar,	756,411
Isle of France,	260,855
Guernsey, Jersey, &c.	318,609
Total to British colonies and descendants,	L. 26,367,053

—Porter's Progress, ii. 104.

The returns for 1839 when published, will, it is believed, show that the colonial and American trade *exceeds* that to all the rest of the globe.

that the true secret of the rapid progress of the population in Great Britain in those times is to be found; and the details of her commercial transactions at present distinctly prove, that, in so far as she is an old European state, the causes destined to retard the increase of population in the later stages of society have come into full operation; and that it is the vigour and growth of the transmarine parts of the empire which have communicated such an unwonted, and in some respects perilous impulse, to the principle of population in its heart, in the advanced periods of life.

It is stated by Mr Porter, whose statistical authority is deservedly so high on this subject, that, although the trade of Great Britain has upon the whole increased greatly since the commencement of the present century, yet her exports to all the countries of Europe have *declined* during that period; and the details given in the note clearly establish that this observation is well founded, and that all the efforts alike of government, and of individuals, have been unable to counteract, in the last forty years, in our intercourse with the continental states, the causes of retardation which spring from the abundance of capital, and consequent high price at which all manufactured articles must be produced. * This is the more remark-

* "That part of our commerce, which, being carried on with the rich and civilized inhabitants of European nations, should present the greatest field for extension, appears to have fallen off in the last forty years in a remarkable degree. If we except the years 1835 and 1836, which were years of extraordinary prosperity, the progress of our foreign trade during the present century has been little or nothing. The average annual value of our whole exports to Europe was less in value by nearly 20 per cent., in the five years from 1832 to 1836, than they were in the five years that followed the close of the war. Our exports to the United States of America, which have only twelve millions of inhabitants, at the distance of 3000 miles across the Atlantic,

able, because it is well known that, for the last seventeen years, and in fact ever since the reciprocity system was introduced by Mr Huskisson, the whole foreign commercial policy of this country has been directed to the object of maintaining our footing in foreign markets by the sacrifice of our navigation laws, and the opening of the British harbours to some branches of their industry. That all these efforts have totally failed, is now decisively proved by the result: for while the British shipping with the countries with whom reciprocity treaties have been concluded, has declined to a fourth of its amount when that system began, and theirs with us has increased in a similar proportion, the export of British manufactured goods to all these countries has either remained nearly stationary or declined.* It is evident, therefore,

are more than half our shipments to Europe, with a population fifteen times as great as the United States, and abundance of productions suited to our wants." The total exports to Europe were,

	Northern Europe.	Southern Europe.	Total of three years.
1814,	L. 14,113,775	L. 12,755,816	L. 26,869,591
1815,	11,971,692	8,764,552	20,736,544
1816,	11,369,096	8,284,469	18,653,565
		Total in three years,	L. 66,276,600
1834,	L. 9,505,892	L. 8,501,141	L. 18,057,033
1835,	10,303,316	8,161,117	18,464,433
1836,	9,999,861	9,011,205	19,011,066
		Total in three years,	L. 57,522,532

—Porter's Progress of the Nation, ii. 99, 101.

The extravagant exports of 1814 may be fairly set off against the similar commercial excess of 1836: so that this table exhibits a real decline in twenty-five years of a *sixth*, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts made by the reciprocity system in the intervening period to prop it up.

* Since 1820, British shipping with Northern Powers has declined to 1836:

that the causes destined to retard population have already come into operation, with reference to Great Britain, considered merely as a commercial power dealing with foreign states, with just as certain steps as they formerly did to the great mercantile emporiums of Italy or Flanders; and that the counteracting causes which have overshadowed, and in some degree concealed this effect, are to be found in the unparalleled extent of the naval power and colonial dominion, which Providence, for the evident purpose of extending the European race and the Christian religion throughout the globe, has hitherto granted to the British empire.

This is the real cause of the total failure of the reciprocity system, which may now be considered as demonstrated by experience, and the results of which have been so completely at variance with what its able authors anticipated. Its object was, by a reciprocal exchange of commercial facilities and advantages, to secure for the British empire, in a highly opulent and advanced stage of her existence, a large and increasing trade with other empires placed in the same latitude with herself, and approximating or endeavouring to approximate to the same state of commercial activity and manufacturing industry. This was a vain attempt. In striving to secure it we were contending

---

Prussia, from 539 ships to 270
Denmark, 57 - - 16
Norway, 168 - - 15
Sweden, 123 - - 66

Vessels with Great Britain have increased from 1820 to 1836:

Prussian, from 258 to - 903
Danish, 44 - 624
Norwegian, 558 - 785
Swedish, 71 - 250

—Porter's Progress of the Nation, ii. 177, and Parliamentary Tables, i. 53, 63.

against one of the most powerful laws of nature, which is of incalculable importance to the human race. We were endeavouring to communicate to an aged frame, the vigour and elasticity of youthful years, and to monopolize for one state the benefits which were meant for mankind. The attempt failed, because the unseen operation of this law was far too strong for human resistance. It was only when we virtually abandoned the vain design, and directed our energies to the increase of our colonies, and the performance of our distined mission upon earth, that new vigour was thrown into the social system, and a fresh infusion of young blood poured into the aged veins of the empire.*

It is impossible to expect, however, that this state of extraordinary prosperity, arising from colonial advancement, is to continue permanent; or that England, by having planted her seed in so many distant parts of the world, is to avert the weakness of age, and escape the common lot of mortality. The parent of so mighty a progeny will herself descend to the grave; her full-grown offspring will break off from the empire: they may even themselves stab their progenitor to the heart. Already the British empire seems to stand on a dizzy pinnacle, and a false step in any direction might speedily precipitate it into ruin. Whether the present state of the empire be suited to withstand the shocks of adverse fortune, and whether the government which its vast and mercantile community has established, is endowed with the strength and foresight requisite to maintain inviolate so colossal a power in the midst of innumerable dangers, it is not the object of the present work to inquire. But this much may be con-

* Vide infra, Chap. XVI. on Colonization and the Reciprocity System.

sidered as certain, that, sooner or later, by the violent strokes of fate, or by the insensible decay of time, the industry and population of the British islands will become stationary or decline. Whether her naval supremacy is at once to be destroyed, and her colonial empire severed from her grasp by a single or a few dreadful shocks, as was the case with Athens at Aigospotamos, with Carthage and Zama, or with Pisa at La Meloria, or with Genoa at Malmocco; or whether the gradual influence of the decay of time and retarding causes in the later stages of society is destined to weaken her resources, and she is to descend from her present pinnacle of greatness by as slow a decline as the Byzantine empire in ancient, or the Italian republics, and Flemish commercial cities in modern times, at present lies buried in the womb of fate. But in either case, the loss of our colonial empire and maritime superiority must undoubtedly ensue in process of time; the kind of decay and period of dissolution are alone doubtful. It is neither possible nor desirable for the interests of humanity, even in this country, that such a perpetual tenure of greatness should be assigned to any single state. And it is therefore a matter of the very highest importance to every friend of mankind and of his country, to consider what would be the probable fate of the people of the British islands, in the event of such a catastrophe either gradually or suddenly occurring.

Involved in uncertainty, as all such speculations in regard to the future necessarily must be, there is yet reason to hope, from the experience of former ages, that this transition would not be attended either with the convulsions or sufferings which is generally anticipated. Other commercial states have undergone

similar vicissitudes; and it is in them that we may see the mirror, if national sins have not called for some extraordinary national punishment, of the stationary condition or declining years of the British empire. The wealth of the world has fled from the Italian cities,—but the cultivation of the plain of Lombardy at this moment never was surpassed; all the pendants of Europe are no longer to be seen on the banks of the Scheldt,—but the fields of Flanders still flourish in undiminished fertility; the merchants of Florence no longer number all the kings of Europe among their debtors,—but cultivation has spread to an unparalleled extent through the terraces of the Arno, and rural contentment exists in its most enchanting forms on the vine-clad hills of Tuscany. It is in these examples that we may see and hope for the prototypes of the euthanasia of British greatness. It is in the transference of mercantile wealth to agricultural industry, and the rapid absorption even of the greatest manufacturing population in the labour of the fields, that the real security, in an advanced stage of civilisation, against the destruction of commercial prosperity, is to be found. Vast and overgrown as is the present manufacturing population of Great Britain, the experience of former states which have undergone similar vicissitudes, warrants the hope that it could be absorbed in a very short time, and permanently and comfortably maintained in the labour of the fields. The single alteration of substituting the kitchen-garden husbandry of Flanders in our plains, and the terraced culture of Tuscany in our hills, for the present system of agricultural management, would at once double the produce of the British islands, and procure ample subsistence for twice the number of its present in-

habitants. And humanity has no cause to dread a change which, reducing to a third of their present numbers, the inmates of the British factories or the operatives in the British towns, should double the number of its country labourers, and overspread the land with rural felicity.

In this view it is well worthy of observation, how marked is the provision made in the different methods of agriculture, which naturally succeed each other in the progress of improvement, for the varying circumstances and necessities of the members of society.

In the earlier periods of agriculture, farms are everywhere, and in all ages of the world, small, and often extend hardly beyond the limits of the labour which can be managed by a single family. This arises from the want of capital and poverty of the cultivators in such circumstances, and may be observed in all countries where agriculture is in its infancy, or the people, whatever the state of social progress may be, engaged in the cultivation of the soil, are in a depressed or indigent state.

The engrossing of farms, and augmentation in the size of those which are generally undertaken, which was felt as so sore an evil in England during the greater part of the eighteenth century, and which operated with such severity in the Highlands of Scotland in the commencement of the nineteenth, is but a step, and it is often a painful one, in the progress of society. It takes place when capital is for the first time applied to agriculture, when large profits are realized from great agricultural undertakings, and when the labour of a great number of horses, the application of capital and a vast amount of human strength is required to bring the rude and uncultivated soil into a state of

good husbandry. It is in that state that agriculture is to be found in Norfolk, in great part of Kent, in the Lothians of Scotland, and generally in all the highly cultivated and recently improved districts of the country.

But this is neither the final nor the best state of rural husbandry. When the great operations of agriculture have been completed, the principal drains made, woods cleared, and enclosures finished, the advantage of farming on this large scale is no longer felt. The earth being brought into a state of general and improved cultivation, requires not so much the vast efforts of agricultural strength and capital, as the nicer and more delicate operations of the human hand. Vast tracts of uncultivated or partially improved soil are no longer to be had; the arable districts are generally appropriated and improved; and the competition of agricultural capital leads both to the subdivision of farms, and the change in the mode of their cultivation. Experience then proves, that the horse and the plough are very rude implements compared to the spade and the hand; no method of cultivation is found to be so productive as that which is effected by the greatest application of human labour; and the garden system of husbandry comes to supersede every other. This change has already taken place in Italy and Flanders; the farms in Lombardy,* as Arthur Young has told us, and as every traveller can testify, are seldom more than from twenty-five to fifty acres; in the Tuscan hills they are still more diminutive;† while in the plains of Flanders they are equally small, and the whole country resembles a vast kitchen-gar-

* Chateauvieux, 17; and Young's France, ii. 34.

† Chateauvieux, 76; Simond's Agric. de Toscane.

den.* The cultivation of Japan is conducted entirely by means of little farms, of which each cultivator is the owner; the whole country resembles a continued garden; and in rural labour its immense population, without any foreign commerce, find ample means of subsistence.† A cause of unerring certainty induces this change at the period it is required. It is found that farms cultivated in this way yield larger returns, and can pay higher rents, than when they are managed on a more extended scale. This change is already conspicuous in Great Britain, in many of the richest districts of which, the size of farms is sensibly diminishing. And it is impossible to imagine a more beautiful adaptation of the laws of society to the interests of the human race than is here exhibited; for this change in the mode of husbandry takes place in those old and opulent states, and in that state of commercial progress when manufacturing industry is retarded by the operation of inevitable causes, and the direction of industry to the cultivation of the soil is, in a peculiar manner, required. Such an opening is accordingly provided in the simultaneous alteration which takes place in the operations of agriculture, and in its labours even the densest population find a never-failing source of comfort and subsistence.

Nor is such a change to be regarded as necessarily or even probably subversive of the national independence. That our naval superiority and colonial empire are dependent on our commercial greatness, and would inevitably be destroyed by its overthrow, may be considered as certain. But although the decay of their mercantile greatness has proved fatal to the inde-

* Young's France, i. 397–401; and Shaw's Austrian Netherlands, 24.

† Thunberg's Travels, iv. 83–84.

pendence of all the maritime republics of ancient and modern times, yet it does by no means follow that the same results must attend a similar decline in the British empire. Neither Athens, nor Carthage, nor Genoa, nor Venice, nor Holland, had thirty millions of inhabitants in their land territory. A nation possessing such a power, especially when enjoying the advantages of an insular situation, is, except from the decay of military virtue in its own people, invincible. Japan is a country of nearly the extent and about the population of the British islands: it has neither foreign trade nor maritime powers; and it has long been the object of covetous desire to the Chinese government, which possesses nearly ten times its population and resources. But Japan still maintains its independence, and has done so inviolate through a succession of ages; and history has recorded that on one occasion, when two hundred and fifty thousand Chinese soldiers landed on the Japanese territory to effect their subjugation, not one man returned to tell the tale of disaster to his country.

It is perhaps of no less importance to the friends of humanity to observe, that experience warrants the belief that, so far from such a stationary condition of society being necessarily attended with general suffering, it is, on the contrary, followed by a high degree of public felicity, if general virtue remains among the people, and a tolerable administration of justice is preserved by the government. Perhaps the best test of public happiness is to be found in the average duration of human life; for unquestionably want and suffering tend to abridge existence by the weakness they communicate, and the diseases they engender in the frame,—as much as comfort and prosperity have a

tendency to improve the body and prolong the average chances of life. Now statistical research has amply demonstrated, the important fact, both in the British islands and principal European states, that the average period of human existence is increasing, and that the difference in this respect, especially in Great Britain, Holland, and Flanders, the most densely peopled countries in Europe, has, in the last half century, in particular, been very great. In fact, it is upon this marked improvement in the chances of life within the last half century, and since the Northampton tables, on which their calculations are based were framed, that the great profits of life insurance companies in every part of the empire have been founded. * Farther, what is very remarkable, the chances of life are uniformly found to be *much greater* in the old and densely peopled, than the comparatively young and thinly inhabited states.† With-

* "It is well established," says Quetelet, "that in the countries in which civilisation has made the greatest progress, there is a marked diminution of mortality and improvement in the chances of human life."—Quetelet, i. 241.

Marshall and Rickman give the following tables of the diminished mortality of England during the last 130 years.

1700, .	1 in 43	1806 to 1810, .	49
1750, .	1 in 42	1816—1820, .	55
1776 to 1800, .	48	1826—1830, .	51

Rickman's Tables and Hawkins's Medical Statistics, p. 16. In the middle of last century the annual mortality in London was 1 in 20: it is now 1 in 40. Hawkins, 18.—In France, in 1781, the mortality was 1 in 29: in 1802, 1 in 30: in 1839, 1 in 40.—Quetelet, i. 244. In the Appendix will be found a very interesting table, compiled with great care by Moreau, which shews a diminution of mortality during the last eighty years in every country of Europe; and what is very remarkable, this diminution is greatest in the countries which have been longest civilized, and are most densely peopled.—See Appendix, No. V.

† Annual mortality in England and Wales, . 1 in 59
Sweden, . . 1 in 48

out, therefore, indulging in any Utopian or extravagant hopes, or supposing that the time can ever arrive in this scene of probation, when the poor will not be with us, when time and chance will not happen to all, and vice and folly will not occasion a wide extent of human misery; we may yet rest in the confident belief, that increased suffering is not the necessary concomitant of mankind in the later stages of society; that it has hitherto often been so only because corruption and iniquity have in such periods pervaded all ranks of the state; and that the means of equal felicity await all ages of the world, if they are not deficient in the industry and virtue which are the condition of happiness to a fallen race.

There is not, perhaps, to be found in the whole range of philosophical inquiry, a more remarkable instance of intelligence and design, than the laws which have now been considered in regard to the direction which capital in different stages of society afford. Commercial wealth and enterprise, the mainspring of improvement to civilized man, by their operation prevented from becoming excessive in any particular quarter, they are made to flow from situations in which they have become unduly plentiful, to others in which their aid is required, to foster industry, and promote the multiplication of mankind; and after having raised the human race to the station of manhood in their native seats, they are compelled to perform the same necessary service in distant regions,

Annual mortality in	Holland and Belgium,	1 in 43
	Prussia, . .	1 in 36
	Wurtemberg, .	1 in 33
	France, . .	1 in 46
	America, . .	1 in 37

—Cleland's Past and Present State of Glasgow, 80; and Quetelet, i. 245.

and spread in the uninhabited parts of the earth those blessings and that activity from which they had arisen in the country of their birth. Vain are all human efforts to counteract the operation of this universal law; vain all attempts to restrain within bulwarks of mortal construction, the fertilizing flood of human improvement! A power stronger than human laws, a force more irresistible than human policy, forcibly expels the seeds of improvement into the wilderness of nature. A constant provision is thus made for retarding the growth of opulence and numbers in those situations where there is any hazard of their becoming redundant; and directing their impulse to distant and uninhabited regions, and for providing in the efforts of individuals to promote their own advantage, the certain means of gradually spreading the race of man and the blessings of civilisation throughout the world. The democratic energy and republican spirit which generally spring up unbidden with such commercial opulence, is the moving power which compels mankind in that stage of society to follow the same direction; and sends forth the ardent colonist in the footsteps of mercantile adventure, to plant his race, and leave the fruits of his industry in distant lands. It is by the combined operation of both that the happiness of men in each individual state is combined with the general design of Providence for the civilisation and peopling of the earth; like the beautiful process in physical nature, by which the warmer and cooler parts of the atmosphere are mingled together; by which the burning surface of the earth is refreshed by the breezes of a purer region, and which appears in the gentle undulations of the air on the horizon in a sultry day.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE MODIFICATION WHICH THESE PRINCIPLES HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE INFLUENCE OF HUMAN CORRUPTION.

ARGUMENT.

Modification which these principles have received from the corruption of Mankind—From Human Weakness—From unavoidable Misfortune, Human Folly or Depravity—From the oppression of Government—Double effect of oppression sometimes diminishing, sometimes augmenting the tendency to increase—Opposite effect of good Government and virtuous habits—Characteristic difference of the European and Asiatic Governments—Fatal effect of Asiatic Despotism on the action of Population—Action of the principle of Increase in these countries—Importance of such unlimited action in these circumstances to the Fortunes of Mankind, and its coincidence with the happiness of individuals in these communities.

If the foregoing principles are well founded, it should follow, that in no instance, according to the provisions of Nature, is the tendency to increase inconsistent with the maintenance of human happiness; and that the desires which naturally spring up in the minds of men in the progress of society, combined with the causes which in its later stages come to influence the demand for labour, are amply sufficient to prevent the numbers of the species from advancing more rapidly than their interests and welfare require.

How, then, it may naturally be asked, is the existence of a *redundant population* in different parts of the world to be accounted for? What has become of these limiting principles in China, Hindostan, or Ireland, which have so long groaned under the pressure

of superfluous numbers? And if mankind have no tendency to increase faster than food can be provided for them, whence the experienced necessity of providing colonies in opulent states to draw off the needy part of the populace, or the misery in which the poor are involved in so many quarters of the globe?

Before proceeding to the solution of these questions, two preliminary observations naturally suggest themselves.

In the *first* place, a *certain degree* of suffering is unavoidable in the condition of men in this world, and cannot be avoided even in the most favourable political circumstances. Enthusiasts may anticipate a period when vice and sorrow shall prevail no more; when the duration of human life shall be indefinitely prolonged by the discoveries of science, and the evils of fortune in a great degree counteracted by the sway of justice and freedom. But experience furnishes no support to such speculations. So far as observation or history teaches us, the period will never arrive when man will be withdrawn from the strokes of fortune. In all probability, "the poor will always be with us:" a certain part of mankind will be ever involved in suffering; and human life will always exhibit those chequered scenes of joy and sorrow which it presented to our first parents. An examination of the human mind suggests a doubt whether the character of the individual as well as the species is not dependant on such vicissitudes; whether an uninterrupted course of prosperity would not be fatal to those who enjoyed it; and whether we would not become disqualified for Heaven, if we received its blessings in this world. But whatever may be thought

on this subject, one thing is perfectly clear, that in the present condition of human nature, a certain share of suffering is the unavoidable lot of nations as well as individuals; and that we must not ascribe to the principle of population, consequences which result from the state of probation in which mankind is placed.

In the *next* place, it is to be recollected, that a large portion of human suffering in every age has, and probably in all time to come will arise, from the follies, the passions, or the crimes of men. Experience gives no countenance to the idea that any complete stop ever can be put to these sources of evil, and certainly the annals both of individuals and nations afford decisive evidence, that a great part of the physical or moral evils in which they have been involved, is to be ascribed to their own imprudence or faults. If we reflect upon the events of our own lives, or upon those of others which we have observed around us, there is probably no one who will not be sensible that great part of the suffering which he has undergone or witnessed might have been avoided, by a due attention to the commands of religion, the precepts of virtue, and the dictates of prudence. For the disobedience of these precepts, the disregard of these dictates, whether by nations or individuals, neither Providence, nor the necessary condition of man on earth, are responsible. The utmost that can be done by human wisdom or philanthropy, is to diminish these sources of evil, and mitigate the suffering by which this disobedience is punished; to remove it altogether, is, and ever will be, utterly impossible with a corrupted race.

In the *third* place, it is of importance to observe,

that we are not justified in ascribing the existence of human suffering, in many situations, to a disproportion between the powers of population and the means of subsistence, where this result is obviously produced by other causes. If mankind are suffering under the tyranny of Asiatic despotism in countries abounding with the riches of Nature, it is unreasonable to refer their distress to the impossibility of extracting food from the soil. Under a more equitable government, infinitely greater numbers might be maintained in comfort and affluence. If absurd laws or feudal prejudices prevent the people from exercising their industry or cultivating the earth, we are not justified in imputing the consequence to Nature, but to those errors in the social system, which prevent mankind from partaking of her bounty.

The true test of misery, arising from the laws of Providence, is when it exists equally in all circumstances. Thus the uncertainty of life, the anguish arising from the loss of friends, the vicissitudes of fortune, or the pains of sickness, may fairly be ascribed to the laws of our being, because they remain unchanged in all ages of the world. For the same reason, the existence of a certain degree of guilt in the individual, and of a certain portion of suffering in the community, can be imputed only to the operation of these causes. But where misery is found *unequally diffused,* and exists in a very great degree in some situations and comparatively to a small extent in others, it is wholly unreasonable to ascribe it to the principles of Nature. We pardon certain indiscretions in the individual, and consider them as owing to the common frailty of our nature: but when either vice or virtue rises to a very

high degree, we cease to speak of the laws of humanity, and consider the individual as either responsible or laudable for such deviations from its ordinary standard.

If, therefore, the suffering in the political world is permanent and universal: if forms of government have no influence upon it, and the progress of society leaves it unchanged; the only conclusion is, that it arises from some cause beyond the reach of human control, and that for some inscrutable cause it forms part of the destiny of man in this world.

But if, on the other hand, the distress of mankind is in the highest degree variable and uncertain: if it prevails to a most distressing extent in some situations, and in others is comparatively unknown: if it is found to be dependant on the form of government, the prevailing institutions, the religious instruction and virtuous habits of the people; then the fair conclusion is, that it arises, in part, at least, from causes within the reach of control: and that, although it can never be wholly removed, it may, to a very great extent, be alleviated by human means.

And upon this question issue is joined with those who maintain, that "the misery produced by Government is slight and superficial, compared with those deep-rooted seeds of evil which have their origin in the principles of human nature."*

In considering the influence of government or human wickedness upon social happiness, it is of the utmost importance to attend to the *double effect* which either its abuse or improvement produces upon the habits and situation of mankind.

* Malthus, 2d edition.

The first effect of bad government or individual misconduct, is to produce distress and suffering in the persons who are subjected to its influence; to diminish the security of property; restrain the efforts of industry; augment the privations or unduly swell the numbers of the people. This effect has been felt and deplored since the beginning of the world, and in every age has consigned the oppressors of the species or corrupted societies, to the hatred and execration of mankind.

But this is neither its only nor its worst effect. A far more deplorable consequence is to be found, in the annihilation of all the principles destined to limit the increase of mankind: in the absence of artificial wants, arising from the impossibility of enjoying them; in the relaxation of industry, in consequence of the uncertainty of reaping its fruits; in the general want of foresight, from the experienced impossibility of pursuing a general plan for the conduct of life; in the unnatural force of the passions, from the want of cultivation in the faculties intended for their coercion. The effect of social disorders and bad government, therefore, is not only to increase the suffering and paralyze the industry of every successive generation which is subjected to their influence, but to spread habits among the people inconsistent with their permanent welfare, and to perpetuate the misery from which it sprung, by destroying all connection between the rate of increase and the existing employment for the people.

The first effect of good government is to spread happiness and comfort among those who are subjected to its influence; to give security to property; animation to industry; enjoyments to the people. These consequences have been experienced, in some situations,

from the beginning of time; and in every age have blended the names of patriot statesmen with the gratitude and blessings of mankind.

But this is neither its only, nor its best effect. A far more important consequence is to be found in the progressive developement of all the principles destined to restrain the principle of increase: in the growth of artificial wants arising from the progress of opulence: in the diffusion of industrious habits, from the assurance of enjoying its fruits: in the spread of habits of foresight, from the regular and stable order of things: in the increased control over the physical passions from the growth of desires destined to counteract them. The effect of good government, therefore, is not only to promote the happiness and encourage the industry of every successive generation which is subjected to its influence, but to diffuse habits among the people which are essential to their permanent welfare: to secure the connection between the increase of mankind and the augmentation of the means of supporting them; to provide for the permanent regulation of the numbers of the state, by the comfort and welfare of the individuals who compose it.

If it is only meant by the advocates of the necessary misery of mankind, to assert that the actual victims of oppression are few in number, in comparison with those who suffer from the consequences of their own imprudence or the inability to rear a family, it may at once be conceded that the observation is well-founded. We have only to look to Ireland to be convinced of its truth. But if it is intended to be asserted that this imprudence itself is not mainly owing to erroneous institutions or human wickedness, and that a tendency to

increase faster than subsistence can be provided in them, is inherent in human nature, *independent of the operation of moral causes*, there cannot be a greater or a more fatal error. To hold such an opinion is to throw into the shade the worst effects of wickedness and despotism on mankind; to paralyze the efforts of the patriot and the legislator in the great cause of social happiness; and to ascribe to the Author of Nature, much of that suffering which in reality arises from our own neglect of His precepts.

According to the different degrees in which it either blesses or injures its subjects, government produces different results on the numbers of mankind.

Where absolute power exists in its worst form, as in Turkey, Persia, or Barbary, its effect is to produce a small and miserable population. The insecurity of property, the barriers to industry, the want of knowledge, arrest the increase in the means of subsistence: while at the same time, the same circumstances, by preventing the growth of artificial wants, or the acquisition of habits of foresight, leave the principle of increase unlimited in its operation. Industry is well nigh extinct: labour is avoided: poverty becomes universal. But at the same time wealth ceases to be valuable, because it leads to oppression, and misery becomes familiar, because it is everywhere to be found. The necessary consequence of such a state of things is to render the people at once few and miserable: few, because the means of subsistence can with difficulty be obtained; miserable, because they are too thoughtless of the future to put any restraint on their passions.

Where oppression appears in a more mitigated form, as in China, Hindostan, or Ireland, the effect upon po-

pulation is just the reverse. The security of property, the safeguard of law, and the growth of industry, which inevitably takes place under any system of government which is stable and regular, and affords a tolerable protection to its subjects, enlarges the means of human subsistence. At the same time, the oppressions of the higher ranks, and the obstacles which prevent the growth of a middling class, or the acquisition of artificial wants by the lower, prevent the developement of all the limitations to the principle of increase. Industry is encouraged: labour prevails, subsistence is increased: but the produce of that labour diffuses only rustic plenty throughout the working-classes: it enables them to satisfy the wants, but gives them a taste for none of the enjoyments of existence. The natural tendency of such political institutions is to produce a numerous but miserable population: numerous, because the means of subsistence admit of an easy and secure enlargement; miserable, because the limitations to the principle of increase are unknown, and the multiplication of the species is restrained only by the inability of continuing it.

The tendency of good government and favourable political institutions, as in England, Flanders, and Switzerland, is to produce a numerous and happy race of inhabitants: numerous, because the opening of the channels of industry, and the security of the fruits of labour, stimulate the exertions of mankind, and multiply the means of providing for them; happy, because not only is the individual himself secured from the effects of oppression, but the numbers of the species are permanently adapted to the circumstances of society. The same freedom and protection which secures the welfare of the people developes the de-

sires, and awakens the ambition which are intended for the limitation of the principle of increase. How great soever the multiplication of the species may be, it is always somewhat below what the demand for labour requires: because in every rank the standard of comfort is fixed at a high standard, and the rate of increase kept within the possible means of subsistence.

In some rare situations the effect of the strong developement of the principles of moral restraint under a favourable government, and in circumstances where the increase of food is attended with difficulty, is to produce a prosperous but scanty population: prosperous, because the numbers of the people are kept within the demand for labour by the foresight and prudence of individuals; scanty, because the situation of the country opposes serious obstacles to the rapid extension of the means of subsistence. Sweden and Norway exhibit examples of this state of things, where the greatest comfort and opulence pervades the cottages of the peasantry; but the country, nevertheless, suffers from the want of a more extended population.

The *mere density* of the numbers of mankind, therefore, can afford no criterion of public welfare. This is the great error which the recent researches of eminent philosophers have exposed.* From the numbers of the people we cannot determine with certainty whether the increase of the species has been owing to the encouragement given to industry, or the discouragement given to artificial wants: from the extension of the means of maintaining additional numbers, or the destruction of the barriers intended for

* Malthus.

their regulation. It may safely be affirmed, indeed, that when the people are numerous and comfortable, the government is practically beneficial, whatever may be its form: and that where they are few and miserable it is the extreme of despotism, how free soever it may be in appearance. But between these extremes there are an infinity of gradations, in which the numbers of the people afford no criterion of public happiness. There can be no doubt that the government of the Netherlands is favourable, and that of Persia destructive to social welfare: but if we looked to the mere numbers of the people, we might conclude that the condition of the Irish peasantry was the most comfortable, and that of the Norwegians the most miserable in Europe.

As little is the condition of the people to be determined by the rate of their increase, on the statistical returns showing the proportion of marriages, births, and deaths. Mr Smith has observed, that he had no great faith in political arithmetic;* and his observation is still more applicable to the population than the wealth of nations. The reason is obvious. In human affairs there are so many concurring causes operating, that a mere numerical result affords no certain indication of the presence or the absence of any given principle, either of good or evil. What bespeaks a highly prosperous state of society, in one situation, and in one period of the world, may be the mark of a totally opposite state of things in another. It is to no purpose to say that the people double in twenty-five years in America, in fifty years in Russia, and in forty-two in the British empire: or that the marriages are to the numbers of

* Wealth of Nations.

both sexes as sixty-five in the first country, as ninety in the second, and as one hundred and twenty in the third. Unless the subsisting demand for labour, the public health, the public morals, the political and physical state, were precisely the same in all the three countries, these numbers would point to no result on which reliance could be placed. The duplication of the numbers of the people in one hundred and fifty years might be a ruinously rapid increase in an European monarchy; while the same result in twenty-five years might be hardly sufficient to keep pace with the rising wants and boundless capabilities of the American continent.

If physicians wish to ascertain whether an individual is in good health, and is pursuing a judicious mode of life, they do not inquire how much he eats or drinks merely, or how far he walks every day, but they look at his general appearance, and examine the indications of his physical strength. If these are favourable, if he has the robust and florid look of health, if his appetite is strong, his sleep sound, and his powers vigorous; it may safely be concluded that his mode of life is upon the whole salutary, and that the dangers arising from some particulars in his conduct are counterbalanced by the influence of other counteracting principles. No such conclusion could with safety be formed from the most minute computations of the rate of his pulse, the rapidity of his pace, or the quality of his food; for what would be highly dangerous to a person at one age or in a particular state of body, may be not only harmless but beneficial under different circumstances of age, habit, or physical strength.

It is the same in the political world. The only sure

indication of the healthful state of the political body is to be found in the condition, habits, and appearance of the different classes who compose it. If they exhibit the signs of prosperity and comfort; if the labouring ranks are at once industrious and opulent: if the higher are active and intelligent: if wealth accumulates without degrading the poor, and population advances without reducing the wages of labour,—it may safely be concluded that the public institutions are in practice beneficial, and the operation of the principle of population in unison with the welfare of mankind. The condition of the people is affected by *all* the causes which are calculated either to elevate or depress the public welfare: and, therefore, their situation affords a certain test of the beneficial or injurious operation of the whole political system.

An examination of the state of the people in the different countries of the world, is therefore the only sure criterion by which it can be determined, whether the misery which is to be found in so many situations, is the unavoidable effect of the principle of increase: or results from the deranged action of that principle, under the pressure of erroneous political institutions or the action of human wickedness.

To many it may perhaps appear unnecessary to examine the condition of the people in different circumstances, in order to show that virtue and freedom produce happiness, vice and oppression misery. A fact so well attested by the history of man in all ages, and in all situations, may seem rather an axiom with which to set out in political speculations, than a conclusion to be derived from political research. But the contrary opinion has been so confidently advanced of late years, and supported by writers of such unquestionable ta-

lent, that it becomes indispensable to enter upon the investigation. The pains will not be misplaced, if they tend to *re-establish the ancient connection between virtue, freedom, and happiness;* and to shake the opinion so favourable to the encroachments of despotic power on the part of the ruling powers, and the illusions of self-love in individuals, that the sufferings of mankind are owing rather to the laws of Nature, than to the prejudicial tendency of oppressive government, or the dissolving effects of human corruption.

In comparing the condition of the European and Asiatic monarchies, the same words must be frequently taken in a very different sense. Such is the prodigious difference between the circumstances of mankind in these different quarters of the globe, that what appears the greatest degree of prosperity in the one, when contrasted with the misery which surrounds it, may often be taken as an unequivocal indication of wretchedness in the other. Travellers passing from the Turkish dominions, even into the worst governed countries of Europe, represent the transition as almost beyond the reach of conception.* After traversing the deserted plains of Bulgaria, the frontiers of European civilisation in Transylvania present the most agreeable spectacle: the magnitude of the cities, the smiling aspect of the fields, the density of the population, the apparent greatness of the public wealth, remind all European travellers that they belong to one great community, essentially superior to any other quarter of the globe.† In the most despotic state of Europe the security to life and property, the progress of knowledge, the diffusion of wealth, the extent of the civilised population, is incomparably greater than in the most pros-

* Walsh, Journey, p. 291. † Clarke's Travels, viii. 282, 283.

perous of the eastern dynasties. When it is said, therefore, that the people are happy in one country and miserable in another, the words must necessarily have a very different meaning when applied to Europe, and to any other quarter of the globe.

The two great peculiarities which distinguish the European from the Asiatic communities are their RELIGION, and the STABILITY of their institutions.

It has been well observed by a traveller in the Turkish dominions,* that the religion of the eastern states, by fixing every thing according to ancient precept, and precluding the changes which naturally arise in the progress of society, opposes a perpetual barrier to the improvement of the species: while the religion of Europe, being less defined in its injunctions, and prescribing only the duties essential to man in all situations, naturally accommodates itself to the progressive character of man. If we compare the condition of the Christian descendants of the Scythian hordes with those who have embraced the Mussulman faith, the truth of this remark will appear very conspicuous. Their original ancestors were the same: the hand of Providence or chance alone determined the direction of one portion of the tribe towards the western world, where, under the name of Huns, Sclavonians or Goths, they laid the foundation of the European monarchies; while another division, under the name of Moguls and Toorkomans, founded the Mogul and Turkish dynasties. It was the *religion* which these savage conquerors severally adopted from the states they vanquished which for ever separated their descendants, and in a few generations rendered the breach so wide, that the Christian warriors could hardly discern in the ene-

* Buckingham's Mesopotamia, i. 182, 183.

mies, whom they encountered in the Holy Wars, the traces of the lineage from which they themselves had sprung.* The difference since that period has become still more remarkable. The license of polygamy, the absolute authority of the Koran, and the fatal belief in predestination, have stopped every species of improvement in the Mahometan states; while the purity of domestic manners has been preserved, the liberty of the people obtained, and the progress of knowledge secured, under the influence of a religion which inculcated the universal equality of men in the sight of Heaven, and inculcated the truths of Revelation, and discharge of his social duties on man.

The *stability* of the institutions of modern Europe is the other great cause of the difference in the relative situations of the European and Asiatic communities. Property and rank are there *hereditary:* families are perpetuated for successive generations: and the wealth acquired by industry or valour is enjoyed for centuries by the descendants of those who acquired it. Very different is the state of things in the eastern world. Rank is there *personal* only: the descendants of princes are sometimes sold for slaves: a barber may any day become a vizier, or a vizier receive the bowstring: riches serve often only to attract the rapacity of power: industry to enrich the perpetrators of violence. Under the equitable rule of the European Governments, labour is encouraged, from the security of enjoying its fruits;—foresight is developed by the permanence of institutions;—individual weakness in Government, counterbalanced by the weight of hereditary nobles. Under the unsettled sway of eastern potentates, weakness in the monarch leads to dissolution of his autho-

* Gibbon, Vol. xi. 52, 53.

rity: the future is habitually disregarded from the impossibility of calculating upon its events: the enjoyments of the moment alone considered, from the experienced folly of sacrificing its gratification. These different circumstances have all a direct influence on the principle of increase: the insecurity and instability of the east at once prevents the growth of industry, and destroys the limitations to population: the freedom and security of the west developes the powers of industry, and regulates the multiplication of the species.

It is a profound sense of this distinction, so vital to human happiness, which will ever inspire all the real friends of mankind with such an abhorrence for those suicidal efforts on the part of the democratic faction, which, by aiming at the destruction of the aristocracy and the general equality of all classes, pave the way at once for the establishment of arbitrary power. It is observed by the greatest of modern historians,* "that the democratic contests of Rome, which commenced with the Gracchi, and terminated with the conquests of Cæsar, by destroying the old Roman aristocracy, left only for the oppression of succeeding emperors the level surface of Asiatic despotism;" and Tocqueville has told us, with emphatic warning, "that if arbitrary power should ever succeed in France, after the destruction of the territorial nobility that has there taken place, it will no longer be the comparatively mild sway of the old French monarchy, but a parallel to it will be found only in the tyranny of the Cæsars."† If the helpless condition of a multitude of separate cul-

* "The Romans had aspired to be equal: they were levelled by the *equality of servitude*."—Gibbon, viii. 12, and viii. 49.

† Tocqueville, ii. 162–164.

tivators in the fields or burghers in the cities is considered unconnected with each other, and unprotected by any superior ranks interposed between them and the throne, which has concentrated in itself the whole power and authority of the state, it is evident that these observations are of lasting application, and that democratic revolution in Europe is a step only, but in its ultimate effects a certain step, to Asiatic despotism.

"When the poor man," it has been said, "yields to the impulse of nature, and contracts an imprudent marriage, he blames, at a later period of life, the unjust institutions of man which have involved his family in want and wretchedness; he laments the unequal distribution of property and earthly blessings, and perhaps charges the Author of his nature with the origin of his sufferings. He never considers that he has himself, and not his Government or his God, to blame for the burden with which he is oppressed."* If the preceding observations are in any degree well-founded, the complaints of the poor man are often better founded than have been generally imagined. Granting that the immediate causes of the difficulties which he experiences may be the imprudent marriage in which he is involved, the question remains what was the ultimate, or, as physicians would say, the predisposing cause? What induced him to contract this imprudent marriage, when there was no demand for an increasing population, and no outlet for additional numbers? It is no answer to this to say it was his own passions; for if these passions had had fair play they might possibly have been counteracted and controlled by other desires, equally provided by the Author of Nature, and specially adapted for the circumstances in

* Malthus on Population, 2d edit.

which he is placed. Instead of a thoughtless peasant, having nothing to lose, awake only to the impulse of his desires, and totally regardless of the future in all his actions, he might have been a frugal labourer, accustomed to habits of comfort, having a rank in society to support, and increasing artificial wants to gratify. It is in reality, therefore, the institutions under which he lives which are often to blame, because, but for some oppression to which he or his country has been subjected, he would probably have acquired the habit of self-command, and been led in following his own inclinations, to have acted in a way conformable to his own and the public welfare. If a parent deprives his child of the advantages of religion or education, he has no right to impeach either the Author of Nature for the principles which he has implanted, or his child for the weakness or degeneracy which he exhibits. Let him blame himself for the vicious habits which he has encouraged, and the fatal ascendency of the passions which they have occasioned.

It is a most remarkable fact, totally at variance with what might *à priori* be expected, but confirmed by the universal experience of mankind, that the dominion of reason over the passions, the habit of foresight, and the power of forming a systematic plan for the conduct of life, are just in proportion *to the degree in which the danger of immediate want, or the pressure of actual suffering have been* REMOVED *from mankind.* The savage who has no stock whatever for his support,—who is in danger of immediate starvation if his wonted supplies from the chace or his herds were to fail,—is totally regardless of the future in every part of the world; while the rich man, whose subsistence and affluence are almost beyond the reach of chance, is incessantly disquieted about the manner in which his

subsequent life is to be spent. The certain prospect of instant death to himself and all that are dear to him, from the occurrence of a very probable event, is unable to draw the attention of the one from the enjoyments of the moment; while the slight and improbable chance of a diminution in the smallest articles of *future* comfort, renders the other indifferent to the means of *present* enjoyment which are within his reach.

With the possession of property, the acquisition of habits of comfort, and the extension of artificial wants, these habits of foresight and self-control uniformly increase in every part of the world. With the deprivation of property, the insecurity of life, and the diminution of comfort, they as certainly diminish. They exist in the highest degree among the rich and affluent, among whom real misery, at least so far as it arises from destitution, is never felt; while they are utterly unknown among the lowest classes, to whom it has unfortunately become habitual. They are to be found almost universally in the House of Peers and wealthy landholders, while they will be sought for in vain among the bogs of Ireland.

It is from this peculiarity of human nature that the fatal influence of *despotism*, whether monarchical or democratic, *upon population* is derived. It is not in the power of government to prevent the instinctive passions of our nature from being felt; but it can effectually prevent the limitations to these passions from being developed; it cannot render men regardless of the gratification of the present moment, but it can render them ruinously insensible to the dangers which attend them. It cannot extinguish the vivifying powers of Nature, but it can give a forced direction to its vegetation, and bring forth the chok-

ed luxuriance of the forest, where the regulated riches of cultivation should have been.

It is dangerous, however, to arraign the wisdom of Nature. That oppressive government is contrary to her intentions, may safely be inferred from its uniform tendency to diminish the happiness of mankind. But upon a nearer examination it will be found, that the recklessness of the future, which is the uniform consequence of public suffering, is essential both to the lasting fortunes of the species, and the ultimate correction of the evils from which it has originated.

It must constantly be borne in mind, that the intentions of Nature extend not only to the preservation or welfare of the individual, but to the maintenance and advancement of the race; and that the means by which this progress is secured, are to be found in the natural influence of circumstances on individual characters, and the influence which their accumulated weight has upon the progress of events. It has been already shown,* that the unrestrained operation of the principle of population is essential, in the first ages of society, to the existence and dispersion of the species; and that, but for the recklessness with which marriages are contracted in savage life, mankind would have perished in the woods, or never been driven into the thorny path of human improvement. The same necessity exists for its unrestrained operation under the despotic sway of arbitrary Governments. There also, the existence of the species is at stake, from the difficulties with which it is surrounded; and but for the unlimited operation of the principle of increase, the race of man might become extinct, and all the advantages of

* See Chap. I.

civilisation lost, from the transient oppression of its rulers. The total absence of artificial wants or habits of foresight, renders the principle of population unrestrained in Persia and the Turkish empire: yet with all this the human race is rapidly on the decline in these fruitful regions: and the traveller, accustomed to the peopled realms of Europe, dreads the total failure of the species in the regions best adapted for its extension.* If population advanced with the measured strides under these despotic governments, which prevails in the states of modern Europe, it would long ago have disappeared, and mankind, as in the American forests, would have commenced their career anew, in the very scenes where it was first created. From these fatal consequences the species is for ever preserved by the improvidence and recklessness which have so often been observed by travellers, and so often censured by superficial thinkers. It is this which, in the gloom equally as the sunshine of political life, perpetuates the great family of mankind; which, by the continued production of fresh inhabitants, imposes the necessity of continued exertion, under circumstances where its ordinary inducements have been withdrawn; and thus preserves the ark of the human race, through seasons of peril, when the light of hope was withdrawn, and reason would have despaired of its fortunes.

Nor is the prevalence of these habits less important in bringing about the downfal of those oppressive institutions which have contributed to their general diffusion. Where despotism exists in its worst form, —where it has thinned the numbers and crushed the

* Walsh, p. 184. Buckingham, ii. 55, 57.

prosperity of the people,—it induces that listlessness concerning the future, that fixed belief in predestination, that aversion to individual exertion, which are at once the forerunners and the instruments of political dissolution. When men are accustomed to disregard the future in all their actions, to dwell only on the enjoyment of the moment, and to sacrifice nothing for subsequent advantage, they become incapable of those efforts of duty which the defence of their country requires. To this cause, to the experienced disinclination of its inhabitants to sacrifice any thing for the support of their country, the decline of the Roman power was ascribed even by the contemporary historians ;* and the same fatal apathy has in our times been palsying the efforts of the Turkish government, under a similar pressure of barbarian invasion.

The same indifference to the future, is the remote cause of the removal of those political restrictions, which in more civilized states occasion a diseased operation of the principle of increase, and that redundancy of population which is regarded with so much dismay by the sufferers under its effects. Mr Arthur Young has truly described the deplorable indigence of the French peasantry prior to the Revolution, and the present age has sufficiently experienced the evils arising from the miserable condition of the Irish poor. Posterity, however, will not fail to remark, that the sufferings of the peasantry in France brought about the Revolution, by which the condition of the labouring poor was in the first instance at least considerably, and, but for the enormous sins they committed during its progress would have been durably improved ;† and

* Gibbon, iii. 66, 67. † Baron de Stael, p. 79, 80.

we are ourselves witnesses to the formidable weight which the Irish people have acquired, since the redundance of their population has swelled the ranks of the disaffected, and deluged their neighbours with distress. The political or imaginary grievances of Ireland might have been long enough disregarded by the English people: but when she thundered in the name of seven millions, they could no longer be overlooked: her real grievances had for centuries overspread her own plains with unheeded suffering, but when they filled the English parishes with paupers, and the English cities with destitution, the magnitude of the evil attracted universal attention to the means of its removal.* Five centuries have elapsed since the Eng-

* It is now more than five centuries since Donald O'Niel, King of Ulster, addressed this memorial in name of the Irish people to Pope John XXII. "Holy Father, we transmit to you an exact account of the grievances sustained by ourselves, and our ancestors, from the Kings of England, and their agents, the Barons born in Ireland. After having been driven by violence from our houses, our fields, and our paternal inheritances: after having been compelled to save our lives to take refuge in morasses, caves, and mountains, they still incessantly harass us in our retreats to effect our final expulsion from the country. Hence has arisen between us an inextinguishable hatred, and it is a former Pope who originally brought us into this miserable situation. The English at first promised to fashion the Irish people to civilized manners, and to give them good laws: instead of that they have annihilated our former institutions, and have either left us without any laws, or established those which were only founded on injustice. * * * All these grievances, joined to the difference of language and manners, which subsists between us, renders it in vain to hope that any peace or truce can subsist between us, so strong on their part is the desire to maintain their ascendency: so vehement on ours the passion to escape from an intolerable servitude, and recover the heritage of our ancestors. We nourish in the bottom of our hearts an inveterate hatred, founded on the recollection of long injustice, on the murder of our fathers, our brothers, and our relations, which will never be extinguished in our own time or in that of our descendants. For this reason, without regret and without remorse, so long as we live, shall we

lish standard was first planted in Ireland, and English cupidity laid in the confiscation of its landed property the deep foundation of suffering to the one country, and retribution to the other; and the mortal hatred sworn by the early Irish to the English power is still unappeased: blood has flowed in our days from the effects of this long resentment, and the empire is now involved in difficulties, chiefly from the numbers, the turbulence, and the misery of the children of this oppressed race. Towards nations, if not to individuals, Providence is truly a jealous God, and visits the sins of the fathers upon the children: in the consequences which naturally arise from injustice is provided the punishment which its wickedness deserves: in the effects which flow from its severity, the means of ultimately destroying it. It is thus, that when the errors in the political system are not great enough to thin the numbers of the people, and weaken the political power of the state, they occasion that convulsion at home which ultimately leads to their removal. The misery, therefore, which is the immediate consequence of the redundant population which flows from political oppression, is in fact the means which nature takes to hasten the downfal of the institutions which have occasioned it; like the swelling of a limb which has been wounded or imbibed poisonous matter, it is the effort of nature to

combat for the defence of our rights: nor shall we ever cease to combat till the time when they themselves from want of power shall have ceased to wrong us, *and till the Supreme Judge shall have taken vengeance on them for their crimes, which sooner or later we are firmly convinced will take place. Till that event takes place, we vow an eternal and mortal war with our oppressors.*" (Fordun, Hist. Scot. Vol. iv. p. 922.)

discharge the noxious substance which occasions the suffering. The benevolent laws of Nature are incessantly operating for the good of man, even when their tendency is most mistaken by human observers. At the moment when the misery of Ireland was confidently appealed to, as demonstrating the unavoidable pressure of population upon subsistence, that very misery was the means which she was taking to terminate the distresses of the country, and heal the wounds of the social system.

The unhealthy action of the principle of population will always terminate when it is no longer required; from the evil being discharged which has occasioned it. It may safely be predicted, that when the real causes of the sufferings of the Irish poor are removed, their superfluous numbers will disappear, the habits of rapid increase will be abandoned, and comfort and industry will resume their sway. It will neither be, however, by democratic power, nor municipal privileges, by Romish ascendency, nor popular agitation, that these evils will be removed. Repose, not excitement, must be the basis on which it is rested; order, not intimidation; security, not terror; retiring industry, not obtrusive ambition. The combined influence of feudal tyranny and English oppression, occasioned a similar morbid action of the principle of population in Scotland two hundred years ago; indigence and suffering universally prevailed; innumerable acts of Parliament to remove the evil were passed in vain; and at the union of the kingdoms, *a fifth* of the whole population of the country, amounting to *two hundred thousand persons*, were in a state

of importunate and hopeless mendicity.* This is as great a proportion as ever obtained in Ireland, even in its periods of greatest distress. No sooner, however, was peace restored to the country by the abolition of religious persecution,† the repeal of feudal privileges,‡ the establishment of a regular and steady administration of justice, and the introduction of a general system of parochial and religious instruction,§ than this enormous body of mendicants was absorbed in the useful occupations of life; the idleness and improvidence which had so fatally characterized the lower orders during the period of their oppression, were exchanged for habits of industry and frugality; the continual pressure of population upon subsistence ceased when the channels of wealth were enlarged, and the means of comfort afforded; and within less than a century after the period of their lowest degradation, the Scottish paupers had entirely disappeared, the habit of improvident increase was unknown, while the increasing demand for labour had *more than doubled* the industrious population.

Nor is it to be imagined that the happiness of the individuals who are subjected to despotic government is necessarily sacrificed during the effort of nature to throw off the load which oppresses it. The same improvidence and disregard of the future, which is the immediate cause of the growth of a redundant population, afford sources of enjoyment to the individual unknown in civilized life, and softens the stroke of suffering to a degree which can hardly be conceived in more prosperous states. It is by supposing the

* Fletcher of Salton, Speech on Union.

† By the Act 1690, c. 19. ‡ By 20 Geo. II. c. 50. § By 1696, c. 26.

subjects of such governments actuated with our feelings, desires, and habits, that their condition appears so unhappy. We forget that nature has accommodated the human mind to all the circumstances in which mankind can be placed, under the varied physical and political circumstances of the species, and that instincts and gratifications to us unknown, compensate to them for the want of those enjoyments which to us appear indispensable. The country of Europe where distress appears in its more aggravated form is Ireland; and Persia is the dynasty of the east, where desolation and misrule have longest prevailed: yet every person who has visited the former country has observed the uniform cheerfulness and joyous habits of the peasantry;* a very competent observer has expressed a doubt whether the people of Persia do not enjoy life as much as in the more civilized and laborious states of Europe;† and the able author, who has demonstrated that it is in the purity of domestic life and simplicity of manners in the east that the real antidote to the whole political evils to which they have so long been subjected is to be found, has confidently asserted the opinion, that the average amount of human happiness and virtue is not less in the east than the west.‡ The French peasantry danced and sung in the midst of the political evils which led to the Revolution; and even under the horrors of West Indian slavery, the evening assemblies of the negroes present a specimen of temporary felicity rarely witnessed amidst the freedom

* Young's Ireland, Vol. i. 124, 126. † Buckingham's Persia.
‡ Urquhart's Spirit of the East, ii. 377, 429.

or luxury of their oppressors.* The freedom from anxiety, the sweetness of momentary gratification, the relaxation from labour which result from the prevalence of habits of improvidence, frequently compensate to the individual for the dear bought comforts of prosperous life, while suffering loses half its bitterness by never being foreseen, and misfortune half its severity by being speedily forgot. "In peace of mind and ease of body," says Mr Smith, "all ranks of men are nearly upon a level, and the beggar who suns himself by the highway, possesses the security that kings are fighting for."†

However much, therefore, we may lament the effects of despotic government upon social happiness: however strongly we may perceive its tendency to derange the progress of the social system, and induce habits inconsistent with the permanent welfare of mankind, we must not imagine that the individuals who are subjected to its influence are necessarily unhappy, or that the misery which we ascribe to the state in general, in reality comes home to all its members. It would be more correct to say, that it removes men *a stage back* in the journey of political life, and compels them in the midst of civilized society to adopt the habits and depend upon the enjoyments of savage manners. Such a change is a very great evil in a political point of view, and the misrule which occasions it can never be too severely censured by political writers: but it is by no means destructive of the happiness of the persons who are subjected to it. Here, as in other instances, the benevolence of nature inter-

* Humboldt, Vol. xi. 127, iii. 421.

† Moral Sentiments.

feres to soften the effects of human injustice; and as the diffusion of habits of improvidence has become essential to the preservation of the race, and the correction of the errors of the social system, so the indulgence of these habits is rendered the means of affording to the individual members of society as much felicity as their circumstances will admit. If they retained under the severity of eastern despotism the cautious conduct, the long foresight, the accumulating habits of European freedom, the existence of such dispositions would be as fatal to the happiness of individuals, as it would be dangerous to the preservation of the species. Life would in that view be a continual scene of disappointment: a constant straining after objects which would never be attained: an incessant craving for enjoyments which were beyond the reach of human exertion. It is by enjoying the present only without a thought of the future: by recurring to the pleasures which despotism cannot take away, and by never feeling the wants which freedom produces, that existence is in such circumstances reconciled with the loss of all the objects for which men in civilized life would care to live. While we lament, therefore, the political causes which have established such habits in the advanced stages of society, let us not overlook their important effects upon the future destinies of mankind: let us recollect their influence in preserving the race through all its misfortunes, and preparing the means of their final removal: and admire the wisdom of Nature which has reconciled such habits with individual felicity, and rendered them the means of softening that suffering which they are ultimately destined to destroy.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF DECAY AND RENOVATION IN HUMAN AFFAIRS.

ARGUMENT.

Necessity for some check to Human Depravity and Increase in many states —Provision for it in the decay of National Virtue and Courage—Prodigious ravages of War in ancient times—Necessity for such destruction at intervals of the species—Difference in modern times—Principles of Renovation and increased vigour which are there conspicuous, which render the destruction of Empires unnecessary as long as they continue—Chances of their longer endurance—Causes of Corruption incident to Free States,—Spirit of Faction and rapid decay of public Virtue from Democratic Ascendency—Final Cause of these Laws of Nature.

As the sins of individuals, the vices of the populace, and the oppression of the higher orders, have in every period of the world contributed to check the operation of the principles, destined to limit the progress of population; so the interests of mankind imperatively require that some powerful and irresistible cause should exist, calculated to coerce the increase of the species in all circumstances when they approach the boundary of human subsistence. It is not enough that feelings and desires are implanted in the breast of man, calculated to limit the rate of his increase, when their operation is required, in favourable situations, and under the rule of justice and freedom. If the limitations to population arose only in such circumstances, the chief dangers arising from a redundance in the numbers of the species would be uncontrolled. A provision is indispensably required

for those who are subjected to injustice and oppression,—in whom selfishness, vice, and folly, reign triumphant,—some causes which shall terminate the reign of profligacy on the earth, and effect, by ruder means, that change in the habits and situation of mankind which is not permitted to arise from the developement of their desires.

These causes are to be found in the concomitant effects of the very corruption, selfishness, and oppression, which render their operation necessary. From the moment that these causes of evil commence their career in society, an under-current begins to flow, which is destined ultimately, if the torrent is unchecked, to destroy it. The same circumstances which make a renovation in the political system necessary, prepare the means of its accomplishment.

"The history of the world," says Gibbon, "contains one perpetual round: valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy, and decline." It is impossible to survey the former annals of mankind without being convinced that this observation has hitherto at least been well founded. We perceive in the history of past nations, that wealth and greatness have uniformly led to corruption, and that the decline of public virtue speedily follows the successes which have crowned its exertions. We may trace among nations a kind of spontaneous return to obscurity and weakness, when, in spite of perpetual admonitions of the danger they run, they suffer themselves at one period to be reduced by powers who could not have entered into competition with them at another, and by forces they have often baffled and despised. "Appearances of this sort," says Mr Fergusson, "have given rise to a general appre-

hension that the progress of societies, to what we call the heights of national greatness, is not more natural than their return to weakness and obscurity, is necessary and unavoidable. The images of youth and old age are applied to nations, and communities, like single men, are supposed to have a period of life, and a length of thread, which is spun by the fates in one part uniform and strong, in another weakened and shattered by use: to be cut when the destined era is come, and make way for a renewal of the emblem in the case of those who rise in succession." "Carthage," says Polybius, "being so much the older than Rome, had felt her decay so much the sooner, and the survivor, too, he foresaw, carried in her bosom the seeds of mortality."*

Melancholy as these reflections are to those who aim at conferring immortality on a single state, they suggest very different ideas to those who trace the general progress of the human race: and there is perhaps no subject so well calculated to display the beneficent wisdom of Nature, as that tendency to decay, in separate nations, which has so often been the subject of regret.

There is nothing in history more remarkable than the rapid increase and prodigious extent of population in favourable situations, in early times. The greatest works which have yet been undertaken by man, the walls of Babylon, the Tower of Babel, the Pyramids of Egypt, were achieved in the infancy of society. Before the race of man had spread beyond the regions immediately adjoining that in which it was first cradled, the most stupendous monuments of human indus-

* Civil Society, p. iii. § iv.

try had been raised. Admitting that there is some exaggeration in the accounts given by the earliest historians of the Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies; even if we should distrust the hundred gates of Thebes and the gigantic walls of Babylon, still enough remains in the ruins of these structures to demonstrate the prodigious efforts of human strength which must have been exerted in their construction.* After the lapse of 4000 years the ruins of the Tower of Babel still attest the first dispersion of mankind,† and the Pyramids, gray with the lapse of forty centuries, "still stand erect and unshaken above the floods of the Nile." The remains of the walls of Nineveh, which once stretched eighteen miles along the shores of the Tigris, and were surmounted by fifteen hundred towers, each of them two hundred feet high,‡ are mistaken from their magnitude for the works of Nature;§ and from the prodigious ruins of Babylon, the cities of Ctesiphon, Seleucia, and Bagdad, have been subsequently formed,‖—the successive capitals of the Parthian, the Persian, and Mahometan empires,—the least considerable of which contained, at one period, six hundred thousand inhabitants.¶ The villages of Persia and Asia Minor are generally placed in the midst of extensive ruins, attesting the immense population of ancient times,** and the palaces of modern Rome have been built from the skeleton of her imperial predecessor. When an accidental fire in the late war con-

* They are stated to have formed a square 15 miles long on each side, and 350 feet high.—Herodot. i. c. 180.

† Buckingham's Mesopotamia, ii. 47–49.

‡ Diodorus Siculus, ii. c. 32. Buckingham's Mesopotamia, ii. 61, 62.

§ Buckingham's Mesopotamia, ii. 51.

‖ Porter's Travels in Persia, ii. ¶ Gillies's Greece, v. 238.

** Porter, i. 236, Keppel's Travels, ii. 117–119.

sumed a large part of the forest on the coast of Asia Minor, the ruins of vast cities appeared on the mountains, and, after a night of a thousand years, again glittered in the rays of the sun. The immense population and prolific powers of India could not be repressed even by the twelve dreadful irruptions of the Tartar tribes, and in the deserted jungles of Bengal, extensive edifices are still discovered by the huntsman, the names of which have perished in the lapse of time.

Appearances of this sort are decisive of the state of society in which they originated. They indicate the labours of a vast population, assembled by the force of a despotic government, and crushed by the weight of the power which maintained them. From the industry of freemen such gigantic structures can never be expected: the price of labour where the individual is free to choose his own employment, precludes their commencement. The example of Athens under Pericles is no exception to this remark: a state which has 30,000 free citizens and 400,000 slaves,* cannot be considered as a free country. It was not during the Roman republic that the Coliseum, or the Baths of Caracalla were formed: but in Rome under the emperors, when the wealth of the world was lavished on the ornament of the imperial city. The venerable cathedrals of modern Europe arose during the influence of Catholic superstition, when the great body of the people were sunk in slavery: no similar structure could be attempted amid the free states of later times. For a parallel to the edifices of antiquity, we must not resort to the cities of England or America, but to Paris as it was adorned under the

* Gillies's Greece, v. 371.

despotism of Napoleon, or to Petersburg,* as it has grown beneath the ambition of oriental power.

Abundant historical evidence, accordingly, remains to prove that the mighty empires and splendid structures of antiquity were raised by the hands of an enslaved population. The innumerable armies of the east, in every age, bespeak the coercion of arbitrary power: the battalions of freemen, superior in valour, are infinitely inferior in numbers. We are informed that when Babylon was commenced, two millions of inhabitants were drawn together from all parts of the empire;† and the Pyramids were in all probability erected by the Jews during the days of their Egyptian bondage. The single fact, that in all the states of antiquity, the great bulk of the labouring classes were *slaves*, demonstrates the condition of the people even in the most favourable situations. Each Spartan who fought at Platea was accompanied by seven Helots; a fact which shews that the slaves in Laconia were at least *ten times* as numerous as the freemen. It is established that foreigners resorted from all quarters to enjoy the benefits of the Athenian constitution;‡ yet even in Attica the freemen were not above *a twentieth* part of the whole population. To so extraordinary a degree had servitude increased under the Roman empire, that it was not unusual to find the slaves amount to 400 in a single family: and when a proposal was introduced in the senate that the slaves should wear a particular dress, it was prudently dropped, lest it should be discovered how few the freemen were

* Clarke, xi. 391–392.

† Herodotus, iii. 37.

‡ Gillies's Greece, v. 371.

in comparison to their number.* If such was the condition of the labouring classes even in the free states of antiquity, it may be imagined, that, under the despotic sway of the eastern monarchs, their condition was still more deplorable. In our admiration for the genius, the patriotism, and the magnanimity which characterized the free citizens of Greece and Rome, or for the splendid monuments of ancient magnificence, we overlook the degradation and misery of the great body of the people; we forget that these virtues belonged to the higher orders alone, and that this splendour was raised by the hands of an enslaved population, or wrung from the labour of captive provinces.

As it was the tendency of the political institutions of ancient times, therefore, as it still is of the eastern empires,† to draw men together in great numbers into one spot, where they were subjected to domestic or political servitude, it is obvious that the limitations to the principle of population could not be developed among their inhabitants. All these limitations arise from the security of property: from the enjoyment of freedom, and the acquisition of artificial wants. When men are kept in a state of slavery, without either knowledge or property, or the means of individual elevation, their operation can never commence. In the ancient world, accordingly, the principle of increase was almost unlimited in its operation: and in those situations where the bounty of Nature readily yielded the means of subsistence, in the plains of Mesopotamia, on the banks of the Nile, or the shores of the Ganges, the earth was early covered with an almost incredible multitude of inhabitants.

* Tacitus, xi. 24.

† Porter's Travels, Vol. ii. 272.

We have already observed* the essential importance of this powerful operation of the principle of population, and rapid increase of mankind, in order to spread the human race over the globe, and overcome the obstacles with which the early progress of the species were attended. But the continuance of the same habits at a later period, when society had assumed a regular form, and the difficulties of early civilisation had been overcome, could not fail to have endangered the welfare of mankind. If the vast and early population of Babylon, Persepolis, or Rome, had subsisted to *the present times*, without any diminution in their habits of increase, it is difficult to form a conception of the state in which they would now have appeared. That the finest regions of the globe would have been filled with inhabitants, destitute of freedom, energy, or public virtue, and that mankind would have been constantly bordering on the limits of subsistence, may fairly be concluded. We have only to turn to China to perceive the consequence of such stability in political institutions, when unaccompanied by the energy of a few people.

Nor is it only from the dangers of a redundant population that the duration of the dynasties of antiquity would have perilled the happiness of the species. The corruption of manners, which in despotic states has been uniformly found to accompany the acquisition of extensive dominion, and the degeneracy flowing from the enjoyment of public wealth, would have produced consequences not less fatal to the moral character of mankind. In modern Europe we can form no conception of that debasement which in ancient times fol-

* Supra, Chap. I.

lowed the splendours of national success. The pages of Tacitus have conferred a lasting benefit upon the species, by portraying the terrible effects which followed the victories of the Roman arms, and destroyed the character of a once generous and noble people. So universal had this degeneracy become in the later stages of the empire, that it reached even the remotest provinces of their wide dominion, and rendered the Roman name, in the estimation of the northern states, synonymous with everything which was most base and revolting among mankind.* If such was the fate of the country of Scipio and Fabricius,—of the people whose energy subdued the fairest portions of the globe, and blessed mankind by the excellence of their civil government,†—what would have been the condition of the species, if the despotic empires which were overthrown by their arms had still subsisted As if to demonstrate the consequence of such an event, one mighty empire survived the general wreck; during the long night of a thousand years, the Byzantine annals exhibit a continual decline in the character of the species; and at the period of its final overthrow, the human race had sunk incomparably lower than in those provinces of the empire which had first fallen before the arms of the barbarians. The same age which witnessed the fall of the Greek empire beheld the revival of liberty and knowledge amidst the descendants of the Gothic conquerors of Italy, and the fugitives from the sack of Constantinople, heard the poetry of Dante, and beheld the dome of St Peter's.

From the possibility of such dangers mankind are effectually secured by the consequences of the

* Liutprand, ii. 481. † Gibbon, ix. 143.

same corruption which threatened to produce them. Coëval with the population which it was ultimately destined to check, there existed in the states of the ancient world a tendency to decay, arising from the imperfection and injustice of human institutions. The same depression of the labouring classes which rendered the principle of population unlimited in its operation, developed the causes of national decline. The selfishness, the corruption, the effeminacy which the acquisition of wealth and the enjoyments of peace invariably produce, undermined the foundations of public prosperity, and prepared the downfal of a system which counteracted the ends of the social union.

Universally it will be found that the loss of *military virtue* is the first effect of the corruption of public character, and the continued debasement of the great body of the people. This is a most important circumstance, because it deprives the state, which is so degraded, of all means of defending itself from its aggressors, and exposes its wealth, without the means of resistance, to the rapacity of invaders. It is by this law of nature that the equilibrium of the social system is preserved; and a limitation provided to the increase of mankind, where the laws destined for its regulation are not permitted to develope themselves.

How much soever wealth and luxury may corrupt their possessors, in the rich and fertile districts of the globe, there are always some situations, in which the influence of such sources of depravity cannot generally be felt. In the cold and sterile regions of the North, and in the desert plains of the South, wealth cannot be accumulated, and men cannot decay. Scythia and Arabia, accordingly, have in every age been

peopled by inhabitants leading the same nomade life, and possessing the same active and hardy character. Imperious necessity chains them to frugality; the sterility that surrounds them sets a limit to their desires; the hardships they experience sustains their fortitude. The character of the pastoral nations has in every age been the same, because they are compelled by circumstances to the same mode of life in every period of the world. The Tartars of the present day differ in no respect from their ancestors in the days of Herodotus; and in the manners of the wandering tribes who now infest the deserts of Mesopotamia, we are transported to the days when Abraham sojourned in the land of Urr.*

While the greater part of the globe furnishes the means of a vast increase in the numbers, and an incessant change in the habits of men, it is in these sterile and inhospitable regions that their character and pursuits remain forever the same. If the Scythians and the Arabs do not share in the improvement of civilisation, they are not weakened by its vices: if they are stained by the cruelty of savage manners, they possess the energy of the savage character. It is from these great high-lands of humanity that the stream of conquest has in every age flowed down upon the inferior scenes of existence: it is in their recesses beyond the reach of dissolution, that the energy necessary to sustain the human character is prepared, like the glaciers in the physical world, which the sun of summer is unable to dissolve, and from whence, in the solitude of the Alps, those undecaying fountains are fed which

* Buckingham's Mesopotamia, i. 77, and 161-2.

spread life and fertility through the surrounding plains.*

The vicinity of the pastoral tribes to the parts of the world where civilisation first appeared and wealth was first accumulated, afforded a constant opportunity for the infusion of the enterprising spirit of the desert into the corrupted cities of the plain. When an empire had risen to eminence in ancient times, its inhabitants became corrupted, and its cities swarmed with a degraded and innumerable eastern population. But the shepherds of the north were always the same, and in the solitude of their deserts Nature was preparing the regeneration of the world. While the civilized empires of the east were advancing in wealth, in numbers, and in wickedness, the wandering tribes of Scythia were preparing to burst from their deserts in quest of subsistence. Unmarked as it was amid the blaze of military glory, the fatal hour was fast approaching which was to witness their fall; and the cloud, which seemed at first only a speck on the horizon, swelled till it had buried the universe in its darkness.

The tide of conquest has in every age rolled from the north to the south; from the regions of poverty to those of wealth; from the seat of hardihood and courage to those of effeminacy and corruption.

> Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar
> Hath Scythia poured the living cloud of war;
> And where the tempest burst with sweepy sway,
> Their arms, their kings, their gods were rolled away:
> As oft have issued host impelling host,
> The blue eyed myriads from the Baltic coast,
> The prostrate south to the destroyer yields
> Her boasted titles and her golden fields.

* Saussure, Voyage aux Alpes, iv, 172.

With grim delight the brood of winter view
A brighter day and heaven of azure hue,
Scent the new fragrance of the opening rose,
And quaff the pendant vintage as it grows.

This is the general law of nature; the apparent exceptions only confirm the principle. The conquests of the Mahometans attest the superiority of the hardy inhabitants of the desert over the degraded subjects of the Persian and Roman monarchies; but even the fervour of religious enthusiasm was unable to withstand the enervating effects of victory and power, and the dissolution of the empire of the Caliphs took place within a few generations of those who were subdued by the followers of Omar. The Roman arms, with all the superiority of art and discipline, were unable to vanquish the comparatively savage warriors of Germany; and the historians of the empire confess with a sigh, that it had cost the legions fewer victories to extend the frontier to the Euphrates and the Tigris, than to advance it a few miles to the north of the Danube. * Under the later emperors, the southern provinces owed their safety entirely to the mercenary valour of the troops that were levied on the northern frontier; and the mistress of the world would have sunk before the Gothic invasion, centuries before the days of Alaric, but for the protection which she purchased from the arms of her enemies.

Courage in the south is the transient effect of political or religious enthusiasm, of the spirit of conquest, or the ambition of rising civilisation. But it cannot survive the successes which it produces, and

* Tacitus, Ann. ii. c. 37.

dissolves in the wealth which it has earned for its possessors. In the north it is the hardy and perennial growth of the climate and the soil, and remains unchanged through all the vicissitudes of fortune. Conquerors have made occasional irruptions from the warm climates of Europe and Asia into the deserts of Scythia: but all the great settlements of mankind have come from the pastoral regions. History affords many instances in which courage and effeminacy have alternately prevailed in the empires of the south: it contains none when the former virtue was awanting in the northern nations.

The consequences of this permanent distinction in the character of the different families of the human race are in the highest degree important. But for these perennial fountains of energy and virtue in the north, mankind might have been irrecoverably degraded in the first stages of civilisation. But for the facility of accumulating wealth in the favoured regions of the south, men would have remained for ever chained to the wandering life of their Scythian ancestors. It is by the occasional intermixture of the different races, that the destiny of the species is accomplished, and the progress of civilisation reconciled with the dignity of individual character. The political convulsions are not to be regretted which have saved Europe from the fate of China.

War is the great instrument by which the agency of these important laws of Nature is maintained. The increase of mankind in the pastoral regions produces periodical invasions of the agricultural or commercial states; the wealth which follows a course of peace and prosperity attracts from afar the rapacity of

northern ambition. During the rise of civilisation, the superiority of discipline and art is sufficient to repel the danger. The Cimbri, whom Marius destroyed on the plains of Lombardy, and the Helvetii, whom Cæsar vanquished in the defiles of the Jura,* were not less formidable than the armies which under Alaric and Totila overthrew the empire. It is the decay of military virtue which exposes civilized states to destruction from the efforts of their barbarous neighbours. Their fall does not take place till they have conferred all the benefits on mankind of which they were capable, and till their farther continuance would be a misfortune to humanity. The destruction of Nineveh by the Medes, of Babylon by the Persians, of Rome by the Goths, and of Constantinople by the Turks, served only to extinguish so many branches of the human race, in which age had withered the sinews of virtue, and prosperity exhausted the sources of happiness.

If we compare the condition of mankind in the states of modern Europe with that which prevails in any other quarter of the globe, or which was to be found in the nations of antiquity, we shall see abundant reason to be grateful for the character and habits we have derived from our barbarian descent. Whatever now distinguishes European civilisation, and has given its inhabitants a superiority over the other nations of the world, their freedom, their courage, their energy, and their virtue has descended to them from their Gothic ancestors. The rudiments of the English Government, the basis of the English character

* Cæsar, Lib. i. c. 6 and 7.

is to be found in the woods of Germany.* While the last lights of ancient civilisation were expiring in the decay of the Byzantine empire, the dawn of a brighter day was appearing in the western world: the freedom which the devotion of Roman patriotism in vain endeavoured to perpetuate, struck root in silence amidst the Saxon tribes; and the sacred flame, which the ancient world was unable to preserve, was snatched from their grasp by the descendants of the warriors who had destroyed it.

The physical conformation of the globe is singularly adapted to facilitate this incessant regeneration of mankind. The human species might have been placed in situations where no such revolutions could affect it. Impassable mountains or arms of the ocean might have separated the rude from the civilized inhabitants of the world; the empires of the east might have been secured by their situation from hostile invasion; and human wickeednss might have continued undisturbed in the places where its career first commenced. If the forests of Burmah or America had stretched along the north of the eastern world, the inhabitants of Scythia would have been chained to the hunter life; and the citizens of the Roman or Persian monarchies, how effeminate soever, might have beheld with contempt a few naked savages emerging from the woods on their frontier. The corruption incident to early civilisation would then have been without a remedy, and the channels of human felicity choked by the magnitude of early population. It was the vast and open plains of Tartary and Arabia, lying in the immediate vicinity of the spot where it was first cradled, which, in

* Tacitus de Mor. Germ. c. 36–47.

the infancy of the species, led to the pastoral life, and made the tents of the desert coëval with the cities of the plain on the first dispersion of mankind. While the wandering life of shepherds spread the race of man far and wide over the globe in the first ages of the world, the rapid multiplication of the species in the pastoral state, prepared, in later times, those periodical and dreadful irruptions which were destined to punish and regenerate the stationary part of mankind. The same wilds which first served as a highway to the dispersion, afterwards became the channel which led to the regeneration of the species. When the vices of the south called for the infusion of barbarian valour, it was not a few scattered savages who answered the summons, but Timour at the head of the Tartar Horse, or Genghiskhan, with the hordes of Scythian cavalry.

The effects of these political catastrophes upon the population of the ancient world, were in the last degree important. Accustomed as we are to the effects of war in civilized times, when the most bloody contests are followed by an increase in the numbers of the people,* it is difficult to form a conception of the desolation which it produces in barbarous ages, when the void produced by the sword is not supplied by the impulse of subsequent tranquillity. A few facts will show its prodigious influence in former ages. It is ascertained by an exact computation, that when the three great capitals of Khorassan were destroyed by Timour, 4,347,000 persons were put to the sword.† At the same time seven hundred thousand people were

* Jacob's Report on European Population, 1827.

† Gibbon, vi. 56.

slain in the city of Mousul,* which had risen in the neighbourhood of the ancient Nineveh, and the desolation produced a century and a-half before by the sack of Genghiskhan, had been at least as great.† Such were the ravages of this mighty conqueror, and his Mogul followers, in the country between the Caspian and the Indus, that they almost exterminated the inhabitants, and five subsequent centuries have been unable to repair the ravages of four years.‡ An army of 500,000 Moguls, under the sons of Ginghis, so completely laid waste the provinces to the north of the Danube, that they have never since regained their former numbers;§ and in the famine consequent upon the irruption of the same barbarians into the Chinese empire, thirteen millions are computed to have perished.‖ During the great invasion of Timour, twelve of the most flourishing cities of Asia, including Delhi, Ispahan, Bagdad, and Damascus, were utterly destroyed:¶ and pyramids of human heads, one of which contained 90,000 skulls, erected on their ruins.** Dreadful as was the destruction of life in these inroads, it was less considerable than that which followed the intestine struggles of the invaders among each other, or the private wars which succeeded their establishment in the conquered territories. By the wars of the Saracens, Franks, and Huns, the once flourishing districts of Apulia, Campania, and Calabria, were reduced to such a degree of desolation, as to be compared by a contemporary writer to that which

* Malcolm's Hist. of Persia, ii. 422.
† Buckingham's Mesopotamia, ii. 41. ‡ Gibbon, xi. 411.
§ Gibbon, xi. 420. ‖ Ibid. x. 427. ¶ Ibid. xii. 45.
** Ibid. xii. 24.

succeeded the deluge.* Long before, at the time of the final overthrow of the Roman government in 476, the human race was almost extinguished in the north of Italy by the repeated invasions of the Goths, and the greatest cities of Lombardy exhibited nothing but a heap of ruins.† By the irruption of the Huns under Attila, seventy cities in the Grecian empire were totally destroyed, and the desolation produced by the ravages of the Goths a century before had been nearly as great.‡ The captives carried away by these barbarians in their incursions were more numerous than those whom they put to the sword, and this was the great cause of the continued decline in the population of the Roman empire.§ On more than one occasion they crossed the Danube with 120,000 prisoners dragged at their horses' heels.‖

Such was the depopulation of the ancient world about the middle of the third century, that in the city of Alexandria, which contained 600,000 souls,¶ the loss amounted to *one-half* of the whole inhabitants in a few years; and there is reason to believe, that over the whole extent of the empire the diminution at the same period was nearly as great.** During thirty-two years of the reign of Justinian, the barbarians annually made an incursion into the Grecian empire, and they carried off or destroyed at an average on each occasion 200,000 persons.†† Nor was the depopulation of the southern and western provinces less during the same disastrous period. In the wars of Belisarius in Africa five millions of its inhabitants are com-

* Gibbon, x. 252. † Ibid. vi. 235. ‡ Ibid. vi. 53.
§ Ibid. vi. 57. ‖ Ibid. vii. 282. ¶ Ibid. i. 452.
** Ibid. i. 456. †† Ibid. vii. 284.

puted by a contemporary writer to have perished;* and during the contests between that illustrious warrior and his successor Narses, and the barbarian armies in Italy, the whole Gothic nation, and nearly *fifteen millions* of the natives of Italy, disappeared.† The plague which followed these sanguinary contests carried off still greater numbers than the sword; and during the fifty-two years that it desolated the Roman empire, it is said to have destroyed a *hundred millions* of inhabitants.‡ The consequences of these concurring causes were great, and in many places have proved irretrievable. The plains of Lombardy relapsed into a state of nature, and were covered with forests, inhabited by wild beasts, as in the first ages of the Roman republic; § and the imperial city sunk so low, that, but for the adventitious aid of superstition, it would, like Babylon and Persepolis, have been erased from the book of existence;‖ though at the period of the first conquest of the Goths it contained 1,200,000 inhabitants.¶ In Africa and Asia Minor the human race has never recovered the decay of that melancholy period, and two of the most flourishing provinces of the Roman empire, the latter of which contained at one period five hundred flourishing cities, have ever since been almost in a state of nature.**

Nor was it only in the eastern world that the increase of mankind was exposed to such serious shocks from the devastation of war. By the contests between the British and Saxons, after the Romans had retired from the island, the inhabitants of Britain were

* Procopius, c. 18. † Ibid. c. 18. Gibbon, vii. 354, 401.
‡ Gibbon, vii. 424. § Ibid. viii. 154. ‖ Ibid. viii. 160.
¶ Ibid. v. 263. ** Ibid. i. 80.

almost exterminated; * and the country between the Tyne and the Tees reduced to a perfect solitude. † During the civil dissensions which preceded the accession of Stephen to the English throne, all the barons fortified their castles, from whence they issued forth to ravage the territories and destroy the subjects of each other. In these bloody feuds many hundred thousand Englishmen are computed to have perished.‡ The imagination can hardly picture to itself the state of all the European monarchies during these periods of feudal anarchy, when the horrors of war pervaded every district of the country, when every castle was a scene of violence, and every valley deluged with blood.§ During the wars between France and England subsequent to the battle of Cressy, one-half of the inhabitants of the former country are said to have perished; ‖ and the loss inflicted on Scotland was at least as great, in proportion to the numbers of its subjects, in the course of the disastrous contests which originated in the ambition of Edward I. The destruction of human life, both in Europe and Asia, which followed the extraordinary but beneficial frenzy of the Crusaders, is well known.¶ Eight hundred thousand pilgrims are computed to have perished in the first and

* Henry's Britain, i. 39. Gibbon, vi. 395–6. † Ibid.

‡ Hume's England. § Gibbon, x. 148.

‖ Sismondi, Hist. de France, Vol. x. p. 172, 286.

¶ The Byzantine historians are at a loss for expressions to denote the innumerable multitudes who were suddenly poured upon them from the populous nations of the west. It would be more easy, they exclaim, to count the sands of the ocean, or the leaves of the forest, than the Christian warriors. (Gibbon, Vol. xi. p. 107–108.) On one occasion they endeavoured to number the multitude, but after 900,000 had passed they desisted from the vain attempt.—Gibbon, Vol. xi. 107.

second of these romantic expeditions,* before the regular forces under Baldwin and Godfrey advanced into Asia; and the Latin warriors sighed as they passed a pyramid formed by the bones of three hundred thousand of their brethren under the walls of Nice.† The total number of Europeans consumed in these holy wars is said to have amounted to four millions of souls, besides at least an equal number of Asiatic inhabitants: an enormous sacrifice, but which humanity will have little cause to regret, as it saved Europe from Mahometan conquest, and Asia from perpetual servitude.

In the rude and barbarous periods of the world, the principle of population for a long time is unable to supply the chasms produced by such catastrophes. It is not necessary to recur to ancient history for the proof of this observation: the empires of our own times afford ample evidence of its truth. Persia and Turkey afford living examples of countries in which, notwithstanding the utmost riches of nature, the human race is continually on the decline. The former country has exhibited in every age the most extraordinary instances of rapid vicissitudes in the population.‡ In the time of Shah Abbas, who was contemporary with Queen Elizabeth, Ispahan contained 1,000,000 of inhabitants, and was surrounded by 1400 villages. Now its population does not exceed 100,000, and only 200 of the surrounding villages remain.§ The devastation of the Affghan conquerors in the eighteenth century has been perpetuated by the oppression and insecurity which has since prevailed un-

* Michaux, Hist. des Croisades, i. 160.
† Ibid. Vol. i. p. 203. ‡ Porter's Persia, i. 221, 229.
§ Ibid. i. 407-408.

der the arbitrary rule of the Persian princes.* So late as the time of the Emperor Claudius, the population of Persia was computed at 40,000,000; † the widest computations of the present day do not make it amount to one-fifth of that number. ‡ In the Mahometan states, the continual diminution in the numbers of the people has been observed by every traveller, § which is the more remarkable, as, amidst the hardships of the adjoining deserts, the Arabs multiply with surprising rapidity. ‖ The feeble and languid resources of the Turkish empire are unable to supply the voids occasioned by the plague or the sword: cities which a few years ago were of considerable magnitude, now contain only a few houses; ¶ the richest plains even in the heart of the country are as desolate as the steppes of the Ukraine; ** and in Constantinople itself the diminution is computed at 500,000 souls within the last twenty years. ††

Such was the law of nature in the ancient world, and such is the system which still prevails in those countries where society is established on the ancient basis. As the principle of population was unrestrained in its operation, some irresistible checks were necessary to the increase of mankind in the later stages of society. As the political system contained no principles of regeneration, its destruction was indispensable when it had become corrupted. Like the riches of the vegetable world, the dynasties of antiquity successively arose, flourished, and decayed in a short period of time: but they were not permitted to remain after

* Porter's Persia, i. 409, 443, 452. † Gibbon, i. 331. ‡ Porter, i. 231.
§ Clarke; Walsh, 107; Buckingham's Mesopotamia, i. 172.
‖ Ibid. i. 169. ¶ Walsh, 107. ** Ibid. 102. †† Ibid.

their maturity was past, but yielded to the northern blast, and left mankind to begin again the great career of human improvement. Individuals and nations perished, indeed, in the eternal struggle between the energy of the north and the riches of the south; but the human race was not destroyed, and from the scene of devastation, nature sprung up with renewed vigour, and covered the earth with a richer verdure.

To regard the decline of ancient greatness, therefore, with the eye of melancholy, is to view the institutions of man with a partial, and the laws of nature with an illiberal eye. It is to lament the operation of the principles destined in every age to renovate and purify mankind: to regret the laws by which wickedness and corruption are made to bring about their own destruction: to forget the consequences of the continuance of those political institutions, whose dissolution was essential to the welfare of the species. It is the unvarying law of nature, that all institutions which do not provide for the general happiness of mankind, should involve in themselves the seeds of their own ruin; and that the same corruption which renders their subversion necessary, should bring about its accomplishment. Let us lament the tendency of our nature to corruption, not the consequences of that depravity, or the laws destined for its correction: let us blame mankind for the degeneracy into which they have fallen, not the laws which check its progress, and limit the effects of human wickedness. In all the changes of the social world, the operation of laws may be discerned, destined for the good of man; and the traces of the Divine Benevolence are as deep

in the ruins of Rome, or the ashes of Athens, as in the splendour and prosperity of a more virtuous people.

While such appears to have been the laws which regulated the ancient world, the slightest observation of human affairs is sufficient to demonstrate that a very different system is in operation in later times. The states of modern Europe have for the most part outlived the period when decay became manifest in the empires of antiquity, but the degeneracy which was the immediate cause of their overthrow has not yet begun to appear. A thousand years have now elapsed since the union of the heptarchy laid the foundation of the English empire: but hitherto, at least, we perceive neither its nobles, nor its government relaxing in the career of usefulness, and its people, though grey in years of renown, yet rising with the spring and the energy of youthful ambition. The French monarchy has subsisted for a longer period than the twelve centuries which formed the fatal limit of Roman greatness; but the events of the last thirty years have evinced no decay either in its courage or its resources, and for the first time in the history of the world, universal subjugation was apprehended from a nation which had recently shaken off the fetters of an old and long established government. The venerable fabric of the Germanic confederacy still subsists in the centre of European civilisation, and has arisen from the disasters which followed the French Revolution, with an energy comparable only to the unquenchable fire of Roman patriotism. Inferior to her aged rivals in ancient renown, the star of Russia has risen with unequalled lustre in the midst of public suffering, and from her youthful arms the eye of philanthropy

anticipates the emancipation of the eastern hemisphere from Turkish oppression, while the navy of England is spreading freedom and civilisation, with the smiling colonies which it has studded along the shores of the western world.

We are not yet enabled to determine whether these appearances are destined to be permanent, and whether a perpetual duration, or merely a lengthened period of existence, is assigned to the states of our own times. The corruption incidental to prosperity and wealth may still overtake them, and the power of the north may be again called forth to punish and regenerate a sinful world. But this much may safely be affirmed, that the rapid decline to which all the empires of antiquity were subject, is combated in modern Europe by some stronger principle of life, and more powerful springs of health than were formerly in operation: and that if they are ever to be overthrown, it will be in consequence of the failure of those causes of renovation to which the present eminence, and long duration of European superiority has been owing.

The continued energy and undecaying prosperity of the European states, is the more remarkable, because the same causes of decay which have occasioned the downfal of so many empires in ancient times are still evidently in operation among them. The wealth of the world, indeed, is not brought to our shores as to the Roman capital by victorious armies, but a greater and more permanent source of riches has been opened by the extent, the enterprise, and the activity of our commerce. The arms of barbarians are not averted from our country by legions on the Danube or the Rhine, but a more powerful security is provided, and a greater

facility to corruption afforded by the prowess of our navy, and the overshadowing grandeur of its name. The degeneracy of public manners is not encouraged by a series of guilty emperors, but we possess wickedness enough among ourselves to corrupt a larger people, and ample store of dissolute ability to give a splendid colouring to everything that is mean, and revolting, and degrading among mankind.

Nor is the duration of public activity, if not virtue, less remarkable in the neighbouring kingdom. Previous to the Revolution, the metropolis and court of France exhibited the well-known features of public corruption: profligacy of manners, neglect of religion, luxury among the rich, and destitution among the poor. Such appearances in ancient times would have been the immediate forerunner of political dissolution. They were attended, however, in modern Europe by very different consequences: a political convulsion succeeded by the developement of greater energy than the state had ever exhibited, the overthrow of an aged monarchy, followed by the immediate growth of a fierce democracy. After having subsisted a thousand years, the French monarchy seems to have risen again from its ashes in renewed youth, strengthened by the passions of an earlier era in existence. Happy, if she had cast off the vices of the old regime as well as its government, and regenerated the hearts and principles of her people, as she melted their institutions in the fiery crucible.

Upon a nearer examination, however, it will be found, that these symptoms of renovation exist only in a part of Europe, and that its southern states have fallen into that state of degeneracy and languor, which can be revived only by a change of race. For se-

veral centuries, the Italian and Spanish states have disappeared as it were from the face of Europe, and the transient splendour of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries has been followed by a long night of weakness and decline. A passing ray was thrown over their obscurity by the political events which succeeded the French Revolution: but the enthusiasm of the moment has since subsided, and their warmest friends must now admit, that, if the lower orders still possess the energy of their ancient character, the higher and middling ranks are utterly corrupted, and that, when deprived of their French or British leaders, their armies are as incapable of defending their country, as their people are of maintaining its liberties, or establishing on a solid basis the fabric of a constitutional freedom. The political life of the two peninsulas is now maintained entirely by the valour of their northern neighbours, or the efforts of other states for the balance of power, and but for these causes they would be as incapable of averting the sword of foreign conquest, as their ancestors were in the days of Alaric. The renovation of such states is not to be accomplished by a change in the form of government; the debasement of centuries must be slowly eradicated by a physical as well as a political regeneration; and it is from a new race of northern conquerors that the successors of Tasso and Columbus are to spring.

What have been the causes which have imprinted a new character upon the states of northern Europe, and given to the political system of modern times, a principle of life unknown to the most flourishing dynasties of antiquity?

The solution of this question is to be found in the simple fact, that the people of antiquity were Hea-

thens, while those of Europe are Christians: that the first were slaves, while the last are free: that the former are ignorant, while the latter are instructed. It is to the influence of these circumstances that we are to ascribe both the uniform career of improvement which has taken place in modern times, and the principles of moral and political renovation by which they are distinguished.

In every age the higher orders have a tendency to become luxurious, because wealth affords the means of gratifying their desires: they have a tendency to become selfish, because it furnishes them with so many objects of individual gratification: they have a tendency to become corrupt, because they are relieved from the necessity of daily exertion: they have a tendency to become pusillanimous, because they have so much to lose from the consequences of valour. These are the well-known effects of the acquisition of opulence; but it depends on the political state of the country, whether the spread of such habits among the higher orders is not to be fatal to the fortunes of the state.

When the lower orders, as in the Roman or Grecian states, are enslaved, the social system depends entirely on the valour and industry of the higher ranks. As long as they are actuated by the spirit of conquest, or impelled by the energy of rising civilisation, the nation is prosperous, its territory is extended, and its wealth increased. But with the growth of opulence and the enjoyments of power, the corruption incident to a state of prosperity ensues; the descendants of the warriors who extended the dominions of the state, or of the citizens who laid the foundation of its prosperity, waste their days in inglorious ease, and feel no

ambition but that of gratifying their desires. We daily see this change going forward in the offspring of those whose industry or talent has laid the foundation of the fortune of a family; and what is a state but an accumulation of all the families of which it is composed?

The lower orders, however, are farther removed from these causes of corruption, because they are in general strangers to the wealth or consequence which produces it. Whatever may be the depravity or profligacy of their manners, they are free from the vices which spring from the enervating influence of wealth, or the indolence which arises from the unwrought for enjoyments of existence. Necessity compels them in the later equally as in the earlier ages of society to a life of labour, and, however much they may be disposed to imitate the vices of their superiors, they are unable from want of money to indulge the habits which unfit them for exertion.

Universally, accordingly, it will be found, that even in the last stages of political decay, energy sufficient exists in the peasantry of every country to sustain the fortunes of the state, if leaders could be obtained to animate and conduct them. During the long decline of the Roman Empire, the difficulty was severely felt of recruiting the armies in the southern provinces;* and such was the apathy and degeneracy of the people, that even to resist the dreadful invasion of the Goths, *thirty thousand men* were the whole force which could be brought into the field in Italy† and the provinces, though the capital alone at that period contained 1,200,000 inhabitants.‡ But under the banners of Belisarius, a small army was raised, which not only recover-

* Gibbon, iii. 65, 66, 67. † Ibid. v. 215. ‡ Ibid. v. 262.

ed Italy and Africa, and destroyed the whole Gothic nation, but extended the frontier beyond the Euphrates.* Two successive centuries increased the weakness and decline of the state, until the Persian armies drove the legions within the walls of Constantinople, and threatened the immediate dissolution of the empire; but the genius of Heraclius prolonged its existence, and under his guidance soldiers were found, who carried the Roman eagles to the walls of Ctesiphon, and rivalled all that was known of Roman constancy.† The degeneracy of the inhabitants of Italy and the Peninsula has long been observed in Europe; but under the guidance of French officers, the soldiers of Prince Eugene rivalled the veterans of Napoleon, both in bravery and discipline during the Russian campaign;‡ and the Portuguese troops, long the scorn of Europe, when headed by English leaders, showed themselves worthy companions of the British infantry during the peninsular war. Three thousand years and a luxurious climate have softened the naturally mild and unwarlike character of the Hindoos; but under English officers they rivalled the valour of their Mahometan conquerors, and at the siege of Bhurtpore advanced to the breach, which English soldiers refused to assault.§

Examples of this kind may tend to convince us, that the public degeneracy, which is the immediate cause of the dissolution of empires, is in general confined to the higher and middling ranks, and that among the labouring classes there is in most cases to be found energy sufficient to sustain the political body, if it is only allowed to bear upon the fortunes of the state.

* Gibbon, vii. 814. † Ibid.

‡ Segur, Vol. i. 274, 277. § First Siege, Alison's Europe, vii. 195.

But when the advantages of freedom and knowledge are confined to the higher ranks, the public safety depends upon their exertions alone. Domestic slavery, or political servitude, deprives the lower classes both of the power and the inclination to serve their country. Deprived of the means of raising themselves in society by honourable exertion, they sink into the baseness of selfish gratification, and bury in the pursuit of ignoble pleasure, powers which might have changed the fortunes of the world. The state which depends on such support rests only on the point of the pyramid.

It is one of the worst consequences of the increase of wealth in such a state of society, that property is accumulated in the hands of a few great families, and the lower and middling ranks sink into a state of abject dependence on their superiors in fortune. This evil was severely felt in Athens, when 400,000 slaves depended for their subsistence and advancement on 30,000 freemen;* and it ultimately destroyed the Roman empire. So early as the time of Cicero, it was computed that there were only 2000 citizens who were possessed of any property;† and when the empire was overthrown by the Goths, the race of freemen had entirely disappeared, and the whole of Italy and Africa was in the hands of great proprietors, who cultivated their estates by means of slaves.‡ Seventeen hundred of these great families resided at Rome, many of them possessing incomes of L. 160,000 a-year, and the whole populace of the metropolis were occupied in flattering their vanity, or administering to their plea-

* Gibbon, i. 383. Plutarch, ii. 50.

† Gibbon, v. 279. Cicero de Officiis, ii. 21.

‡ Gibbon, v. 263.

sures.* In such a state of society it is not surprising that there was no antidote to the corruption of the times, and that the state fell an easy prey to its barbarian invaders. The extraordinary growth and splendour of the Roman power was owing to the generous policy so early adopted, and so steadily adhered to, of admitting all the citizens of the conquered states into the enjoyment of the privileges of Roman citizens;† a policy so remarkable, and so contrary to the usual dispositions of human nature, that it may almost be ascribed to divine interposition. But it fell a prey at length to the dreadful evil of *domestic slavery*, which like a cancer gradually consumed the vitals of the state, and left nothing but corruption and weakness in those quarters from whence alone the vital organs could be supplied. ‡

If we would obtain a clear idea of the state of the ancient world, and the cause of its degeneracy, we have only to look to the modern West India islands. On what basis does the public welfare rest in those opulent but unfortunate countries? What antidote there exists against the corruption or wickedness of the privileged ranks? What reliance is to be placed on the integrity, valour, or patriotism of the labouring classes? What resistance could they oppose to the arms of a Timour or an Attila? If they are incapable of supporting themselves, the ancient dynasties from the same causes were exposed to similar weakness.

Very different is the condition of society in the free states of modern Europe. In the least fortunate of these countries, the state of the people is infinitely

* Ammianus Marcellinus, xvi. x. and xiv. 6. Gibbon, v. 262.

† Tacitus, Annals, xi. 24, Gibbon, i. 78.

‡ Mad. de Stael, French Revolution, i. 10, 11.

more elevated, and their means of information far greater, than in the most enlightened nations of antiquity. The dreadful distinction between the freeman and the slave—the sullen line of demarcation which separated the higher and the lower orders—is for ever abolished. The great elements of moral and religious instruction, however much they may be in many places, suppressed by power, or deformed by superstition, have been generally secured by the influence of religion, the blessings of the press, and the growing intelligence of mankind. The dependence and degradation of the labouring classes have been diminished by the possession of property: their industry stimulated by artificial wants: their talents developed in many countries by the power of individual elevation. These circumstances have laid the foundations of national prosperity on a far broader basis than could be found among the states of antiquity; and brought the talents and energies of the whole people to bear upon the fortunes of the community. The corruption or weakness of those who are possessed of wealth or enervated by pleasures have thus ceased to be decisive as to the public welfare; the incessant intermixture of talent and energy from the lower classes often sustains the public character, and the degeneracy of those who have risen into the heights of fortune often serves only, by dissipating their wealth, to stimulate the exertions of others who are destined to supply their place. Could we conceive so deplorable a catastrophe as that the whole higher and middling classes in this country were to be destroyed, the blow, however grievous, would not be altogether irreparable: the lower orders, if the stroke had not proceeded from their own injustice, would speedily rise

up to supply their place, and society, with new members, would renew its wonted operations. As there are no bounds to the multiplying powers of the species, so there is no limit in such a state of society to the perpetual infusion of active qualities from the elevation of those to whom they have, from necessity, become habitual.

At the time that the great dynasties of antiquity lost their virtue, and were destroyed by the pressure of barbarian power: when Rome yielded to the seductions of a guilty aristocracy, and sunk before the arms of the Gothic invaders: when Constantinople was enslaved by the tyranny of the Byzantine emperors, and fell before the shock of the Turkish power: when Persia shared in the vices of the Parthian monarchs, and was crushed by the enthusiasm of the Mahometan conquerors, talent and energy lay buried in the obscurity of humble life, probably sufficient to have supported the public fortunes if the circumstances of society had permitted their developement. The defect lay not in human nature, but in the political oppression or national corruption which prevented its elevation. When the energy of the barbarians was infused into the political body, they recovered the character and displayed the virtues of their ancestors. The sons of those who had yielded without a struggle to the Gothic invasion, repelled a more formidable irruption from the arms of Attila; and in the great struggle between European freedom and Mahometan slavery on the plains of Tours, the descendants of the pusillanimous inhabitants of Gaul rivalled the heroism of their Germanic ancestors. Had Rome possessed the institutions calculated to develope the talent and energy which were concealed in her vast empire, she

might have beheld with contempt the whole efforts of the barbarians for her destruction.

The only effectual security which can be provided against the loss of public liberty is to be found in the incessant infusion of an independent spirit from a comparatively uncorrupted body of the middle and lower orders of the state. In the progress of opulence, the rich and the powerful become careless about the preservation of freedom, because they insensibly acquire the feelings, and are influenced by the interests of the privileged classes. We daily see this change taking place in individuals who, while struggling for advancement in early life, are attached to popular opinions, and who gradually, as they advance in years and rise in fortune, incline to the aristocratical party. The change becomes still more decided in their descendants, who, from their infancy, have no association but with the higher classes. It is upon this tendency of human nature, that the stability of institutions and security of property is founded. But when the lower orders are enslaved or depressed, the counterbalancing principle of freedom is suffered to expire, from the failure of those who should inherit its spirit: the race who support the cause of liberty is removed, and none appear to supply their place.

This is the true cause of the indifference about the preservation of public liberty, which has been uniformly observed to attend the progress of opulence in ancient times: and the only antidote to it is to be found in the successive elevation of the more fortunate or able of the lower ranks into the higher stations of society. The middle classes possessed of property, and desirous of elevation, are the natural guardians

at once of public tranquillity and general freedom: what they have already acquired gives them an interest to resist the invasions of popular licentiousness: what they hope to gain stimulates them to oppose the exclusive tendency of aristocratic power. It is on them that the chains of servitude hang heaviest, and to them that the deprivation of political power is most galling. As they rise into the higher situations of society, they retain a portion of the democratical spirit which belongs to the class from which they sprung, and infuse into those possessing political influence a portion of the feeling which might otherwise expire in the class to which they have arisen. And if, in the course of time, their descendants become corrupted, their place is continually supplied by others who rise from the humbler walks of life to fill up the void. But to the maintenance of this healthful spirit in the political body, freedom, intelligence, and public virtue in the labouring classes is indispensably necessary: for without it, neither the desire nor the power of rising in society can exist in the quarter from which alone it can be supplied. It is the diffusion of these advantages which prepares the means of the incessant renovation of public spirit from sources far removed from the influence of corruption, and renders the causes of its growth universal as the multitudes who share its blessings, and as durable as the existence of these qualities among the people in whom it prevails.

It is to the influence of the same causes, that the preservation of public morals in modern Europe is to be ascribed. Much as we may complain of the depravity of manners in the continental states, there is nothing in later times which affords the least parallel to the

hardihood and profligacy of ancient manners.* In the European monarchies the public corruption of the great is in proportion to the despotism of the government. It is greatest in Russia, where political servitude and domestic slavery prevail; and least in Britain, where public freedom and general energy have long been established. There is indeed no fact more instructive, than that England, possessing infinitely greater commercial and landed wealth than any other country in Europe, and long teeming with superfluous capital, should have resisted in a great degree the vices incident to aristocratic and commercial prosperity; and should be at once the richest, the most moral, and the most religious nation in the world. Such a phenomenon, unexampled in the past history of mankind, can be explained only by the influence of habits of freedom and general information on the national character: and the salutary control which public opinion exercises over the higher classes of society.

However difficult we may find it to resist the temptations of our own passions, we have no such difficulty in judging of the conduct of others. The reason, as Mr Hume long ago observed, is obvious. In our opinion of others we are governed by our feelings and our reason; in our own actions we are governed by our feelings, our reason, and our passions. The same principle applies to the judgment which the public form of the conduct of their superiors. Being exempt from the passions which influence, or the circumstances which mislead them, they form their opinion of their conduct, unless in periods of vehement party strife, or universal corruption, by the dictates of reason and conscience, and these feelings are al-

* Gibbon, c. iii. and iv.

ways on the side of virtue. How little soever they may be inclined to practise the precepts of morality themselves, they seldom fail to apply them to the manners of their superiors. Public opinion, therefore, in such countries, continues longer than any other in favour of moral conduct, and in those countries where its influence is felt, a powerful restraint is provided upon the tendency to dissolution in manners which naturally follows a course of prosperity.

To this it may be added, that the establishment and continuance of general freedom, developes a still stronger preservative against public corruption, by furnishing active employment to the higher ranks. The rich and the powerful are not made by Nature more depraved than their inferiors; they only become so by the superior temptations to which they are exposed, and the life of idleness to which they are destined. The vices of the great will commonly be found to arise from one cause, the experienced necessity of supplying by artificial excitation for the absence of that daily labour which constitutes at once the destiny and the blessing of mankind. The childish extravagance of Moscow, the incessant trifling of Milan, the habitual gallantry of Paris,* the ruinous expenses of London, are the different directions which, according to the national temperament, the incessant desire for occupation, and excitement has taken. The only effectual security against this prevailing evil is the establishment of those political institutions which, by giving *employment* to the higher ranks, and rendering their conse-

* In 1824, out of total births in Paris, 28,812
were legitimate, - 18,591
illegitimate, - 10,221.—Dupin, Force Commerciale de France, i. 99.

quence in some degree dependent on mental acquirements, provides both an antidote to the *ennui* of idle life, and an incentive to the exertions of honourable ambition. When political distinction is to be acquired by exertion and not fortune, ignorance becomes disgraceful, because it disqualifies men for power, and activity habitual, because it leads to eminence. A comparison of such of the higher ranks as are engaged in political life in this country, with those who are solely occupied with amusements, or of their general character, with what it was before the Reform Bill altered the constitution, will immediately demonstrate the truth of this observation: and it has frequently been observed, that since the establishment of a representative government in France, the character and habits of the higher orders have been sensibly improved. Hence it is that the prevailing corruption of continental manners has not yet to an equal degree reached the nobility of this country, and that the people of England can still point with pride to the families of many of their hereditary legislators, as containing the brightest examples of domestic virtue, and the most distinguished instances of intellectual cultivation.

It would be in vain, however, that the freedom and intelligence of modern Europe provided these causes of renovation in its institutions, if the military courage of its people were subject to the decay which uniformly succeeded the growth of opulence in ancient times. The powers of the north are still in existence: the energy of the barbarian character is yet undiminished; and, but for the courage of its inhabitants, the opulence of the civilized world would only serve

to attract the rapacity of the spoiler. Hitherto, however, no symptoms of this fatal degeneracy have appeared in the north of Europe. Mr Smith long ago observed, that the longest periods of peace have not diminished the energy of the English character, and that after the peace of Utrecht had subsisted for twenty years, the courage of the British soldiers at the siege of Carthagena never was surpassed in former times.* During the wars which followed the French Revolution, the inexperienced troops of all the European monarchies were successively brought into the field, and on many occasions rivalled the steadiness of veteran soldiers. The Russian militia shared the glory of the regular troops at the battle of Polotsk ;† the Prussian Landwehr equalled the steadiness of the veterans of Frederic, at the battles of Dennewitz and Leipsic; the French conscripts overthrew at Jemappe the disciplined forces of the Germanic empire; and the English cavalry, who had never before drawn their swords in real fight, renewed the days of Cressy and Azincour, on the field of Waterloo. ‡

Experience has not yet furnished materials to determine whether this undecaying valour of the European population, is owing to the hardihood produced by a severe climate, or to the moral effect of those national recollections, which, by means of general information, are retained in the breasts of the peasantry. Probably both conspire to produce the effect. If the Highlanders of Scotland, or the yeomanry of England, are constitutionally brave, as a French writer has expressed it, "at all times and in all places when they

* Wealth of Nations, iii. 272. † Bonturlin, i. 349.

‡ The Scotch Greys had not been in action since 1756.

have eat, drank, and slept well,* the courage of the artisans who have pined from their youth in the smoke of cities, † or of the noblemen who have been nursed in the luxury of the metropolis,‡ must be owing to different causes. It is the peculiar effect of civil liberty to elevate and ennoble the individual character in all classes, and to make the peasant as well as the nobleman feel, that, on his individual conduct, the honour of his country is in some degree dependent. It is the animating effect of general information to perpetuate the feeling of national glory: and to render the achievements and the confidence of past ages, as present to the mind of the soldier as if he himself had shared in their dangers.

To whatever cause it may be owing, the continued courage of modern Europe, notwithstanding the influence of civilisation and opulence, presents reasonable grounds for confidence in the stability of those institutions in which the fortunes of mankind are so obviously concerned. And in this view the ceaseless hostilities of the European states with each other, and the maintenance of those standing armies which their mutual jealousy has created, is not to be regarded as an evil, if it keeps alive that spirit on which the preservation of European freedom is dependant, and affords a lasting security for the salvation of civilisation and knowledge amidst the misfortunes of mankind.

Mr Gibbon has said, that the discovery of gunpowder and of the art of printing, have placed civili-

* Foy's Peninsular Campaigns, i. 231, 233.

† The 71st Regiment at Fuentes d'Onoro, who were almost all recruited from the Gallowgate of Glasgow.

‡ The Guards at Waterloo.

sation beyond the reach of barbarian invasion; and that Europe may now regard without dismay an irruption of the Tartar horse.* If he had lived to see the Cossacks at the gates of Paris, he would perhaps have modified his opinion. Admitting that Europe may view without dismay an irruption of the Tartar horse, can it view with equal complacency an inroad of the Russian horse *artillery*? History will not fail to record, as a remarkable instance of the permanent influence of those causes which determine the fate of nations, that the same plains on which Theodoric and Ætius repelled the arms of Attila,† beheld a more powerful body of victorious invaders under the banners of Alexander; and that on the same spot where Trajan constructed a rampart against the Scythian cavalry; and where the Gothic tribes appeared, who finally overthrew the Roman empire,‡ the Emperor of Russia has more than once conducted the forces of the north to the siege of Constantinople. These circumstances may suggest a doubt, whether the wonted pressure of the advancing or the stationary part of mankind is not still in operation, and whether it is not possible for the northern nations, by directing all their talents to the art of war, to superadd to the energy of savage life the skill and the discipline of civilized society.

But though there may be grounds for supposing that the continued intermixture of different races by the incessant inroads of the northern upon the southern states of mankind is permanently provided for in the laws of human nature; yet experience has demon-

* Gibbon, xii. 173.

† At Chalons in Champagne. Sismondi, Hist. de France, iii. 472.

‡ Gibbon, iii. 46.

strated, that another observation of the same historian is well founded, and that uncivilized nations, before they can conquer the civilized world, must cease to be barbarous. It was by adopting the discipline and improvements of the European monarchies, that the inhabitants of the desert prevailed over the cities of the plain; and with these improvements they abandoned the ferocity of their unlettered forefathers. The irruption of Attila was very different from that of Alexander. Civilisation must blush to acknowledge that in the struggle between barbarism and refinement, the advantages both of power and of moderation were on the side of the former; and that while the metropolis of Russia was destroyed amidst the licence of her civilized armies, the capital of France was saved by the discipline of its Scythian enemies.

To all appearance, therefore, the progress of knowledge and the growth of civilisation, if they have not averted the sword of northern conquest, have tempered its blade; and rendered the irruption of northern power, rather a means for the regeneration, than an instrument for the destruction of mankind. It is no longer the hurricane which destroyed humanity as it advanced, and left a howling wilderness where a smiling garden had been: but the cooling blast, which tempers the heat of a sultry region, and strengthens the delicacy of southern vegetation. The same religion which has changed the face of the civilized, has softened the asperity of the savage world. The intermixture of mankind is now often effected by a gentler interchange than the march of desolating power; the communications of commerce, the progress of colonization, have succeeded in many places to the march of

the conqueror; and society is sometimes purified by its own internal vigour, rather than the force of external subjugation.

How, then, is this cessation in the desolating powers of the world, to be reconciled with the incessant increase of mankind? If the destroying angel has sheathed his sword, what power in nature is to supply his place?

The answer to this question is to be found in the concomitant effect of the very causes which have provided for the permanence of human institutions. The same circumstances which have spread the principles of renovation through the civilized, and softened the barbarity of the savage world, have provided in the gradual elevation of the lower orders, and the diffusion of knowledge, for the progressive limitation of the principle of increase. The destruction of empires is at an end, if the vices which required so severe a remedy have disappeared. The branches of the human race will no longer be extirpated, if the causes which prevented the circulation of its vivifying principles have been removed. The destroying angel has sheathed his sword, if it no longer requires to be wielded.

All the causes which have given stability to the institutions of modern times have a direct influence on the principle of population. The spread of religion, the destruction of slavery, the security of property, the art of printing, the growth of freedom, the rise of the middling ranks, the acquisition of artificial wants, are the circumstances which have at once developed the principles of renovation in the political system, and the limitations to the increase of mankind. In proportion

as society approaches the limits assigned to its progress, its members acquire the habits and the desires suited to a stationary order of things: at the same period, the progressive elevation of the poorer classes provides an antidote to the corrupting influence of wealth and power. A foundation is laid for the permanence of human institutions, by securing the happiness of those who are subjected to their influence.

In judging, therefore, of the degree in which stability is attached to the dynasties of modern times, we have only to look to the tendency of their institutions, and the influence which they exercise on social happiness. The states of antiquity involved in themselves the principles of decay, because their tendency was unfavourable to human welfare, and prevented the developement of the laws intended to regulate the increase of the species: the states of modern Europe have acquired stability only in proportion as they have facilitated the operation of these laws, and promoted the welfare of the great family of mankind. The laws of nature are ever the same: the vices of antiquity, if renewed in modern times, will bring about the same punishment. If the governments of modern Europe have thwarted the ends of the social union, darkened the light or perverted the truth of religion: if they have degraded and oppressed the poor: if they have shut out the light of knowledge, and compelled men to retain in the advanced periods of society the habits and dispositions which were suited only to the lowest: if, in short, they have depressed the multitude to elevate a few, whether aristocratic leaders, regal courtiers, or popular demagogues; then let us not hope for their continuance, nor imagine that any stability belongs to such institutions. They have, without

knowing it, defeated the very object which they had in view: in the vain attempt to secure their own interests, they have closed the only sources of permanent prosperity, and the renovation which they have refused to accept from the elevation of their own people, they shall receive from the sword of foreign conquest. But if, on the other hand, they have promoted the happiness of man, and developed the laws of the social order; if they have encouraged the teaching of true religion, and provided for its reaching all classes of the people: if they have protected the poor against sovereign oppression, aristocratic power, or democratic cupidity: if they have permitted the growth of prosperity and the diffusion of knowledge among the labouring classes, then let us hope for the continuance of such beneficent institutions, and feel confidence in the efficacy of the regenerating powers which they have called into activity to give them permanence. They have, without intending it, taken the most effectual course to secure their real interests: in the generous regard for the happiness of their people they have given what they shall receive in return an hundred fold: by securing the durability of national prosperity they have removed the necessity of national destruction: they have done what was possible for the happiness of man, and they have received in return the Immortality of Nature.

But the anxious wish of the human mind to dive into futurity, will not be satisfied with such alternative or general propositions. We are irresistibly prompted by a desire to know with more precision what our fate is destined to be, and to which of the sides in this picture the fate of ourselves and our children is to incline. Impossible as it is, to an-

swer these questions with any thing like certainty, there are yet various considerations which throw considerable light upon them, and suggest the painful doubt, whether even the best institutions of modern Europe are not liable to sources of corruption and decay, which, though slower in their operation, may in the end prove as destructive as those which in every age have occasioned the destruction of oriental greatness. If we survey the annals of the world, we shall find that, although free states have escaped many of the causes of corruption incidental to despotic ones, they have done so only to incur other dangers peculiar to themselves, which in the end prove not less fatal. Athens sunk after a short period of brilliant existence under the vehemence of democratic faction, and the experienced impossibility of prevailing on a numerous body of indigent electors, either to guard in their external relations against foreign danger, or regulate themselves in their internal administration by any principles of just government.* Carthage perished from the vehemence of party spirit;

* Athens contains 30,000 citizens enjoying the municipal franchise, of whom 9000 only enjoyed an income of L. 60 a year each: 21,000 were disfranchised shortly after the death of Alexander the Great by his successors, in consequence of its being found on a survey that they did not possess an income to that amount, and 12,000 voters, who had hardly any property at all, were removed from the city, and settled in vacant districts in Thrace, and the municipal government vested in the 9000 who enjoyed an income to the amount of L. 80 a year. After this the state became manageable, and ceased to be torn by internal convulsion, although its external independence had been previously destroyed. Nothing farther is necessary to explain the instability of the Athenian councils; the impossibility of making them take any steps to ward off the danger arising from the admission of Philip, or the rapid fall, and ultimate extinction of the Athenian independence.—See Gillies's History of Greece, v. 371.

even the pressing danger of Roman power could not extinguish the indelible hatred of the factions at each other; the arm of Hannibal was paralysed by the jealousy which withheld from him, in the moment of victory, the resources of conquest; and by preventing him from drawing his legions around Rome, the opposite factions, in effect, brought the power of Rome to the walls of Carthage. That celebrated republic is described by Polybius as having uniformly flourished as long as its popular energy was ruled and directed by patrician power; and its decay is distinctly placed, both by him and the most sagacious of modern observers, to the fatal increase of popular power, which laid the foundation of permanent and irreconcileable jealousies between the aristocratic and democratic factions.*

Rome herself, after having, during several centuries, painfully risen to universal dominion, from the long guidance of plebeian vigour, by the steady foresight of aristocratic power, had the seeds of destruction implanted in her bosom by the vehement contests of party which followed the great democratic movement in the time of the Gracchi; and the destruction of the aristocracy in those desolating civil wars which lasted eighty years, is considered by the historian of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, as the certain cause of the ultimate ruin of the state.† Poland, in modern times,

* Polybius, ii. 563, 564. Heeren's Ancient Nations, i. 273.

† "In early times," says Gibbon, "the arms of the people were controlled by the authority of the patricians, and the balance of freedom was easily preserved in a small and virtuous community. The decline of the Roman state was very different from its infancy. An immense and tumultuous capital, a wide extent of empire, the servile equality of despotism, an army of 400,000 mercenaries, and the experience of frequent revolutions."—Gibbon, ii. 60.

has exhibited the most perfect example of republican power on a great scale, which is perhaps anywhere to be met with. Its six hundred thousand electors, in whom absolute, uncontrollable power was vested, bore nearly the same proportion to the sixteen millions of inhabitants in the Polish empire, which the present electors of the British empire do to its vast population; and the incalculable power of democracy, as a spring, was never more clearly evinced in the history of the world, than in the brilliant flashes which occasionally illuminated the gloom of its national existence. But Poland, nevertheless, fell a victim to the same causes which had proved fatal to all her democratic predecessors; the spring tore the machine of society in pieces from the want of a regulating weight; the factions fought, as they themselves said, under the buckler; but it was under the buckler of the Muscovite, the Swede, or the Saxon, that they respectively ranged themselves; and the vehemence of domestic faction, overcoming the sentiment of nationality, armed the people against themselves, and, with unerring certainty, induced the consequence of foreign subjugation.*

These examples, without recurring to others, as to which the present generation can hardly be expected to form a solid judgment, from being themselves in-

* "Nature," said John Sobieski, "has gifted every living creature with the instinct of self-preservation, and given the most inconsiderable animals arms for their defence; we alone in the universe turn ours against ourselves. That instinct is taken from us, not by any resistless force, not by an inevitable destiny, but by a voluntary insanity, by our own passions, by the desire of mutual destruction. Alas! what will one day be the mournful suprise of posterity to find that from the summit of glory, from the period when the Polish name filled the universe, our country has fallen into ruins, and fallen, alas, for ever."—Salvandy, iii. 375, 377.

volved in the whirl of passing events, suggest a doubt, whether the institutions which have given such unparalleled vigour and energy to many of the states of modern Europe, do not involve in themselves principles of ruin and decay, not less vehement in their action and certain in their effect, than the worst tyranny of despotic power; and whether the additional sources of vigour and energy which a purer religion and more liberal institutions have unquestionably communicated to the states of later times, may not have imparted a corresponding and perhaps greater activity to the causes of national ruin. Human corruption, it is now too often found by experience, turns the stream of regeneration by its source; it does not oppose the battery, but seizes the guns, and directs them against the enemy. The powers of knowledge, the energy of education, the glow of patriotism, the fervour of religion, are made the main instruments of action by the selfish passions of the human breast; dignified names and a splendid colouring are given to the suggestions of individual interest; the vigour which popular institutions have communicated to the social system then becomes the means of arming the different parties in the state with stronger weapons, and poisoning their rancour against each other; and the empire in the end falls a prey to the lethargic indolence which succeeds the experience of many revolutions.

Whether these causes of evil—of the fatal power of which every free state that has hitherto existed in the world has afforded melancholy proof—are combated in the European monarchies, and in our own country by causes of real regeneration, not

mere political change, and principles of improvement of still greater energy, and sovereign efficacy, is, as yet, shrouded to every mortal eye. But this much may with confidence be asserted, that the laws of the moral world are of permanent force and enduring application; that every community, and our own among the rest, bears in its bosom the seeds of mortality, if it has not expelled the seeds of vice from the hearts of its members; that it is sin which ever numbers the days of nations, as it is sin which has brought death to individual existence; and that the means of national regeneration and prolonged existence are to be found in no other change but the purification of the public heart, and the reformation of the universal mind. And whatever may be the ultimate fate of the British empire; whether length of days is given to her greatness, or increasing corruption is to prove fatal to her power, her children may console themselves by the reflection, that her achievements in the great cause of human improvement are beyond the reach of fortune; that the deeds of her arms are for ever engraven in the page of history, the efforts of her genius in the heart of man; that subsequent discord cannot extinguish the memory of former unanimity, or subsequent degeneracy of departed virtue; that her race is implanted in every quarter of the globe, and her memory enshrined in the records of mankind; and that, whatever may be her future destiny, she has already exercised a greater and more wide-spread influence over the progress of mankind, than either the genius of Greece, or the legions of Rome.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN THE EAST.

ARGUMENT.

General character of Oriental Oppression—Action of the Principle of Increase in the Turkish Empire—In the Grecian Islands—In Egypt—In Barbary and Lybia—In Syria and Asia Minor—In Hindostan—In China—In Japan—In Persia and Affganhistaun.

IT is in the east that oppression and misrule appear in their most grievous form; and that amidst the choicest gifts of Nature, and under the influence of a perpetual spring, the political debasement of the human species has attained the utmost limits. In discussing, accordingly, the situation of the people under the arbitrary sway of eastern dynasties, the words *misery and servitude* must be taken in a very different, and far stronger sense, than when applied to the states of modern Europe. Oppressed and degraded as the people are in many of these states, their condition is yet prosperous, if compared with the lot of those unhappy nations who crouch under the yoke of Persian or Turkish despotism. In the European states there is always some check to the excesses of the rich, or the tyranny of the sovereign; in most there is something like an administration of justice;

in all, the force of public opinion exercises a salutary control over the oppressive propensity of the holders of power. It has, accordingly, been often observed, that the most despotic sovereigns of Europe would not venture to exercise those acts of arbitrary tyranny which were practised without apprehension by the emperors of Rome. So strong, even under the worst governments, is the influence of general illumination, and of that progressive rise of the lower orders, which has followed the establishment of the Christian religion.

But in the dynasties of the east, no restraint upon the power of government anywhere appears. The power of the sovereign is absolute, and the same uncontrolled authority is delegated to the inferior jurisdictions. With the same sway with which the Sultan rules in the palace, the Aga rules in the village. Despotism is brought home by the successive delegation of authority to the cottages of the poor, and the emperor is not more scrupulous in requiring an account from his vizier, than the private soldier or tax-gatherer, is in wringing from the labourer the fruits of his toil. It is a common saying in the east, that the sword of the Sultan does not fall on the dust: but the sword of the Sultan falls on the vizier, and the sword of the vizier falls on the Pacha, and the sword of the Pacha falls on the Aga, and the sword of the Aga falls on the peasant. In consequence of this accumulation of oppression, it has frequently happened in the east, that the population has been entirely destroyed, even in countries the most favoured by Nature, and in which in ancient times the numbers of mankind were the most abun-

dant. After witnessing the struggles of the European powers for the most trifling accession of territory, and after lamenting the narrow limits within which a great population is thus too often crowded, the European traveller sighs when he traverses the rich plains and smiling valleys of Asia Minor, in which all that is useful and beautiful in Nature are found together, and where the only traces of human habitation are to be found in the ruined temples or solitary columns which rise above the luxuriance of the forest. It is an interesting and important inquiry to examine the causes of this terrible catastrophe of the human species: and how melancholy soever the survey may be, it will not be without its consolation, if we can discern, in the very misery which we regret, and in the destruction which has preceded it, the operation of the same general laws, on which the ultimate welfare of mankind is founded.

I.—Turkey.

Though locally placed in great part within the limits of Europe, the Turkish empire is truly an Asiatic dynasty. Its religion, its manners, its laws, its language, have all sprung from an oriental origin, and the state of its population still more clearly classes it with the regions of eastern servitude.

Throughout the whole extent of the Turkish dominions the condition of the peasantry is indigent, oppressed, and wretched. The Morea, once the abode of riches, and the theatre of splendid events, and which preserved its population even under the Venetian government, continued down to its emancipation from the power of the Osmanlis, a poor and miserable coun-

try.* Wherever he went, the traveller beheld villages destroyed by fire and sword; in many of the towns whole suburbs were deserted; a traveller might often advance fifteen leagues without meeting a single habitation.† "The owner of the hut where we lodged," says Clarke, "told us, that each male is compelled to pay a tax of 70 piastres; that for himself, having three sons, he paid an annual payment of 280 piastres, besides other contributions; that he toiled incessantly with his children to gain enough to satisfy their demands, but found himself unable, after all his endeavours. Having said this, the poor man shed tears: asking us if the time would ever arrive when Greece might be delivered from the Mahometan tyranny: adding, if we had but a leader, we would flock together by thousands, and soon put an end to Turkish dominion."‡ The agriculture of the country, the life of the peasants, is destroyed by outrages of the most cruel description. To chase a Greek peasant from his cottage, or kill him on the slightest pretext; to seize his wife and children, and all he is worth in the world, was a matter of sport to the *Aga* of the most insignificant village.§ Driven to the depth of despair, the Moraite tore himself from his country, and sought in Asia a lot less unfortunate. Vain hope! says Chateaubriand, throughout the whole extent of the Turkish empire his condition is the same; he will find Cadis and Pachas even in the sands of Jordan, and in the deserts of Palmyra.‖

The island of Candia, described as so flourishing in the ancient histories, does not contain at present 150,000

* Savary's Greece, p. 383. † Chateaubriand, i. 258.
‡ Clarke, iii. 716. § Chateaubriand, i. 258. ‖ Ibid. i. 259.

Greeks. Yet it is 250 leagues round;* and nothing is wanting but labourers and secure property to make it maintain four times its present population.† The Pachas are absolute :‡ and their sole object seems to be to enrich themselves. With this view, they make use of every pretence to extort money from the Greeks, who are oppressed in a way which is not to be described; and the result of this tyranny has been to destroy the character of the natives themselves. If one has the good fortune to acquire a little property, his neighbour endeavours to discover something whereof to accuse him before the Pacha,* who generally makes these dissensions a pretence to rob both parties.§

When Candia was in the hands of the Venetians, Setia, Gisa, Petra, Sisamo, and Sphaetica were crowded towns; now they are obscure villages. In these days it rivalled Venice in wealth and population; it is now, comparatively speaking, a desert. ‖

Under the Venetians, Crete, though exceedingly populous, exported corn to a large extent; at present, the island is obliged to import grain.¶ Its hundred cities are spoken of in ancient writers: it does not in all probability contain one-fourth of its former population.** Were this island under a better government, men would multiply without end, villages and ruined towns would be rebuilt, land would be brought into cultivation, the arts would return; in a word, the superb island of Crete would revive from its ashes. ††

Few countries are so favoured by Nature as the island of Cyprus. Corn, wine, oil, sugar, the metals

* Savary, 377. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. 375. § Ibid.
‖ Ibid. 383. ¶ Ibid. 388. ** Ibid. 377.
†† Thornton's Turkey; Savary, 388.

are its natural productions. It contains several ports, all the materials requisite for ship-building; in a word, everything which can render industry either extensive or profitable. But the tyranny of the Turks has counteracted all these natural advantages.* Under their despotism it is neither peopled nor cultivated. From a million of inhabitants, the population is reduced to 30,000: from a climate which was blessed with a perpetual spring, it is become unwholesome and unpleasant: from cities and towns that almost touched each other, it now contains only scattered villages and heaps of ruins: from an exuberant abundance of every necessary and luxury, the inhabitants are now reduced to indigence and want. † Nor is this change surprising, when the government of the Turks is considered. The taxes which they imposed were adapted to a much larger population, which then existed, and have not been diminished when the number has lessened. This increases to an indefinite degree the burden on those who remain; and such has been the effect of the misery of the country, and of the emigration which it has occasioned, that the advantages and productions of the climate have not been able to withstand them. ‡

"Few words," says Clarke, "may forcibly describe the situation of Cyprus. Agriculture neglected, inhabitants oppressed, population destroyed, pestiferous air, contagion, poverty, indolence, desolation. Instead of a beautiful and fertile land, once the paradise of the Levant, there is hardly upon earth a more wretched spot than it now exhibits. § The soil, though neglected,

* Thevenot's Travels, i. 172.
† Ibid. De Tott, ii. 138.
‡ De Tott, ii. 138.
§ Clarke, ii. 315.

is exceedingly rich in its nature. But the Greeks are so oppressed by their Turkish masters, that they dare not cultivate the land; the harvest would instantly be taken from them if they did. Their whole aim seems to be to scrape together in a whole year as much as will pay their tax to the governor. In case of their inability to pay this tax, the inhabitants are punished by torture; to avoid this they fly the island. So many emigrations of this sort happen during the year, that the population of all Cyprus rarely exceeds 60,000 persons; a number formerly insufficient to have peopled one of its towns. The sight of such a barren tract of the finest land, suggests interesting reflections to the moral philosopher, thus viewing the horrid consequences of barbarian power." *

The condition of Rhodes may illustrate the general situation of the Turkish provinces. The Pacha is the governor-general of the island, and he possesses absolute power. † He may be guilty of the utmost excesses of tyranny without fear of punishment or control. ‡ He has but to command, and assure the husbandman of his protection, and agriculture would flourish. But he holds his office by a precarious tenure; he knows not whether he may be in his government to-morrow, and he is fearful of labouring for the benefit of his successor. Besides this, the misery of the country is the source of his wealth. As the island does not furnish grain for the support of its inhabitants, he purchases the corn of *Caramania*, which is of an inferior quality, at a low rate, and he conveys this to market in small quantities to en-

* Clarke, ii. 341. † Savary, 90. ‡ Ibid.

hance the price.* And what is still worse, the rate fixed for the first bushel of the new crop serves as the standard for all that is sold during the year; and this must not be departed from, though half the people should perish.† This monopoly, which rapidly enriches those who are concerned in it, is productive of the most fatal consequences to commerce, agriculture, and every species of industry. Another grievance of the severest kind is the continual services of the Nizam: the wages of the people are half sequestrated by him; and he raises the price of the goods he sells to fifty times their prime cost. In consequence of this accumulation of evils, the cries of the oppressed are heard on all sides, but they are disregarded: the oppressor purchases protection with money, and the profits of his crime secure impunity.‡ The effects of this tyranny may be distinctly read in the aspect of the population. The universal poverty and frightful depopulation of the island are indelible marks of the vices of this government. In place of the population with which it formerly abounded, it contains only 36,500 inhabitants: its revenue only 90,000 piastres, of which 34,000 go to the Grand Seignior. Nor are the inhabitants to be blamed for indolence: they are utterly unable to attempt anything for public or private advantage: a few miserable wretches only wander over the plains of this once flourishing paradise.§ This, indeed, is the general system of the Turkish empire: *the capital overflows with riches, while the provinces languish in the most extreme poverty.*‖

* Savary, 100. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. 103. § Ibid. ‖ Ibid.

On the mainland of Turkey the Greeks leave the greater part of their fields uncultivated and waste. Nor is this to be wondered at, when it is considered that they have no inducement to labour. If they should sow or plant they would be deemed rich, and the Aga would find a pretence for seizing their property.* It is hardly conceivable to what a length this dread of displaying *wealth* is carried in the Ottoman empire. "If a bridge falls," says Chateaubriand, "no one repairs it: the work would denote wealth in the proprietor. I have actually seen Greek captains expose themselves to shipwreck in consequence of their rigging being torn, rather than repair it: to such a length do they carry the dread of displaying any appearance of wealth or industry."†

In the rich plain of Romelia, in the vicinity of Constantinople, the cultivation is beyond measure wretched.‡ The Grand Seignior publicly monopolizes all the corn, and with it furnishes the capital. He draws his supplies from the maritime provinces, which are subject to a kind of tax called *Ichtirach*, consisting in the obligation to deliver to the Sultan, at a very low rate, a certain quantity of grain, which he retails to others.§ The consequence of this system likewise is, that all exportation of corn is prohibited: and on occasion of a late scarcity, orders were issued to seize all the grain reserved by the farmers to sow the land.‖ Under such management it is hardly to be wondered at that the vicinity of the capital affords no encouragement to the poor cultivators of Romelia.

* Savary, 50.
† Chateaubriand, i. 268. ‡ Travels in Crimea, &c. 128.
§ Thornton's Turkey. De Tott, i. 35. ‖ Ibid.

Wallachia and Moldavia have been ever since they were subjected to the Turks in the most miserable and indigent condition: so miserable, indeed, as would be altogether inconceivable, when the excellence of the soil is considered, if eastern despotism did not explain anything.* The old chronicles of the country relate, that this province once could muster 40,000 fighting men: the hispodar or governor could not now assemble a fourth part of this number. For a series of years the population has been gradually decreasing; and in a space of 600 leagues in circumference this country does not maintain 600,000 souls.† Nor will this depopulation appear extraordinary, when the oppression to which they are subjected is considered. The country is governed by a *hispodar* or governor; and the proprietors of the soil are termed *boyards*. The hispodar is obliged to pay a certain annual tribute or revenue to the Grand Seignior, and this tax is levied in the most burdensome manner. Both provinces have a governor, and under each are a variety of inferior dignitaries, each presiding over a little district. These governors, both superior and inferior, have too often no other object but to rob and defraud whoever they can. They bring prosecutions against the wealthy, who never can terminate them but by paying money; and to avoid this evil, the merchants and traders are obliged incessantly to make presents to their superiors.‡ Indeed, it may safely be said, that not only the main object, but the sole art of these governors and sub-governors, is to rob and plunder the people, by seizing every opportunity of satisfying their devouring rapacity.§

* Travels in the Crimea, 258.
† Ibid. 336, 270.
‡ Ibid. 332.
§ De Tott, i. 39.

These unhappy provinces are frequently set up to sale: a large price is given by the purchaser, who pays 25 *per cent.* for the money which he is obliged to advance, and the whole of this is in a short time wrung out of the people. Wallachia and Moldavia, accordingly, are more heavily taxed than in their most prosperous days: and when the incredible diminution in their numbers and wealth are considered, it may be imagined how severely these imposts press upon those who remain.* It would seem as if despotism, intent on the destruction of its prey, deemed it necessary to increase its exactions in proportion as men diminished in numbers and wealth. As I traversed Moldavia, I beheld them gathering the eleventh capitation for the year, though it was only October.†

The boyards or proprietors, instead of endeavouring to protect, join in the pillage of their people. They live in the capital. Their object is to reimburse themselves for the sums they are compelled to pay to government; and these local impositions, joined to the sums which the prince levies to pay his tribute, overburden Moldavia to such a degree, that, rich as it is, the soil is incapable of maintaining it.‡ The natural consequence of this is, that the people are everywhere involved in the utmost indigence, with the exception of the boyards and governors, who are, at the same time, great proprietors and cruel tax-gatherers.§

These different grievances, when acting with united force: the taxes which the hispodar is obliged to levy to pay his annual tribute: the tyrannical manner in which they are collected, the oppressions of the boyards, the bloody wars of which the coun-

* De Tott, i. 30. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid., i. 39. § Ibid.

try has lately been the theatre, all contribute to diminish and impoverish the population. * In consequence of these disastrous circumstances, agriculture has from time immemorial been neglected in these magnificent provinces, though they are by nature the richest part of the Turkish dominions. The continued labour of an improved cultivation, and the rotation of crops, are utterly unknown. † Not more than one-fortieth of the land is under tillage; for no cultivator sows more than he thinks will be sufficient to supply himself and his family with the necessaries of life, from a conviction that the boyards will seize any thing like a superfluous store,—and awful experience teaches them that this apprehension is well founded.‡

It is in consequence of these causes that emigration is so common from these provinces into the adjoining countries of Austria and Russia. Yet in spite of this emigration, and of the unexampled severity of government, it is wonderful with what promptitude population, if allowed to augment, makes up for any casual losses; and how speedily all traces of war are obliterated by the riches of Nature. § We may learn from this fact both the fertility and natural capacities of the soil and climate which repair these disasters; and appreciate, from the rapidity with which these transitory evils are compensated, how deep-rooted is the oppression which permanently desolates these delightful regions.

The population is *much more numerous* in the mountainous parts of Wallachia and Moldavia than in the plains, notwithstanding their being so much less

* Travels in Crimea, 270. † Ibid. 258.
‡ Thornton's State of Turkey. Travels in Crimea, p. 258.
§ Travels in Crimea, 84.

fertile: and this arises from the mountains affording the inhabitants some protection from the fury of the Turkish soldiery, who dare not dare to follow the inhabitants into these asylums of industry and independence.*

It would be tedious to go over all the provinces of the Turkish empire, and give a repetition of the same scenes of oppression and of misfortune. It may be observed almost universally of the Ottoman dominions that the *very sowing of the ground* is a scene of strife; that the sower or reaper are alike exposed to pillage; and that the implements of husbandry are not more essential to harvest than the carbine, the pistol, and the sabre.† One continued system of plunder and oppression begins at the throne, and descends through all the inferior officers. The government may be considered as an army encamped, the general of which issues orders to forage the country.‡ It is attentive only to strip the governors of the wealth which has been the produce of their extortion. If a complaint is made, the people may sometimes obtain the punishment of the guilty functionary, but never the restitution of his plunder.§ The complainers get nothing but the head of the criminal, and the new governor soon makes them regret the old. The whole system of finance in Turkey consists *in placing a certain number of spunges on the ground, which, by drinking up the dew, gives the sovereign an opportunity of collecting it, by squeezing it into a reservoir, of which he alone keeps the key.*||

In pursuance of this system the government uniform-

* Travels in Crimea, 261. † Clarke's Travels, i. 375.
‡ De Tott, ii. 20. § Ibid. ii. 142. || Ibid. i. 132.

ly connives at the extortions of inferior officers, because they constitute a considerable source of the Sultan's wealth. Not only is it an invariable rule that nothing which is seized can ever be restored to the oppressed by the sovereign, but the produce of the extortion often purchases impunity. * The soldiery in distant quarters generally usurp the public authority; but their opposition to the Grand Seignior is far from diminishing the despotism under which the people suffer. The Janizary, Aga, and every private soldier under them, only become so many tyrants, whom the Porte opposes with caution, whom the Pacha fears, and who are the terror of the whole country.† The permanent garrisons kept by the Turks, joined to the want of discipline among the troops, give them a sort of property in the place where they are stationed: they there exercise rights consecrated by custom, which they unite to maintain, though utterly subversive of the peace and good order of the state.‡

It is to the government alone, founded as it is on an oppressive religion, that we are to impute the slavery of some, the tyranny of others, the vices of all.§ The Greeks and Armenians, excluded from civil employments, threatened incessantly with the loss of their lives and their fortunes, have almost everywhere become cringing through fear. The sale of all employments, and the precarious tenure by which they are held, converts the depositaries of authority into oppressors. Justice is venal, because the Cadis have been laid under contribution. All persons who receive pay from the Sultan, from the Janizary upwards, are liable

* De Tott, ii. 142. Eton's Present State of Turkey, p. 72.
† De Tott, ii. 147. ‡ Ibid. ii. 148.
§ Olivier's Travels, i. 219.

every instant to death and confiscation.* This inspires fear, and prompts those in office to make the most of what they hold by so frail a tenure.† The vices of the people, as well as their miseries, spring, in a great degree, from the oppression of Government.

Under the influence of so many concurring causes, it is possible, that the population of the Turkish dominions might have been entirely destroyed, were it not for some causes which have an opposite tendency. Among these, the institution of *Azams* is one of the most important, and may safely be said to have delayed the ruin of the greater part of the provinces.‡ It is the duty of these officers to watch over the safety of individuals, and defend them from the unjust enterprises of the Pacha.§ The Jews and Christians have their chiefs also, but an unjust accusation against them is seldom terminated but by the sacrifice of a sum of money. It too often happens, however, that the *Azam* is in league with the Pacha against the people, who thus have no redress whatever. In towns, again, the safety of individuals is much increased, by all those of every trade being united in a corporation, the chiefs of which watch over the individuals composing it;‖ and it is to this cause, that we are to attribute the remarkable difference, observable in every part of the Ottoman empire, between the numbers, industry, and comfort of the inhabitants of towns, compared with those who dwell in the country.¶

But by far the most important circumstance which in every age has limited the oppression of the Turkish government, is the village system, which prevails almost universally over the east, and may be consider-

* Olivier's Travels, i. 219. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. 201. § Ibid.
‖ Ibid. ¶ Volney's Syria, &c. Olivier, i. 201.

ed as the greatest blessing and grand distinction of oriental civilisation. By this institution, which prevailed also in the Roman empire, the whole country is divided into little communities, who pay a certain fixed tax or rather tribute to the government or Pacha, in consideration of which they are relieved from all further exaction on the part of these officers. The proportion in which each individual in the community is to bear his share of this burden is ascertained with nicety, and, in general, faithfully observed. Probably the wisdom of man could not devise any other system equally well calculated to shelter the poor in despotic countries from the oppression of the powerful. As long as society is progressive, or even stationary, it operates in general as a very effectual protection; but when the desolations of war, or the grinding tyranny of government, have rendered cultivation retrograde, it becomes the source of great and increasing oppression; for government will admit of no diminution in the total amount of the tribute from each community, and, consequently, if a considerable part of its members are dispersed or destroyed, the burden comes to fall with increasing, sometimes intolerable, severity, upon those who remain. It was to this cause that the decline of agriculture and population in the Roman provinces has been ascribed by the most enlightened of its historians.* And the same circumstance is considered by recent observers as the cause of the still swifter decay of industry and the numbers of mankind in the Turkish dominions in recent times.†

There are limits also imposed to devastation and tyranny, in consequence of the force of custom in some

* Gibbon, vi. 173, 174; Sismondi, Hist. de France, i. 174, 175.

† Walsh, 102, 103.

instances, and the influence of the protection of religion in others. Property vested in mortmain, in the hands of the ministers of religion, is in general tolerably secure, and it is with them, that the little capital which arises from trade or commerce is commonly invested. But this secure place of deposit benefits those only who have the means of making money, who are a very limited part of the inhabitants: and the principal circumstance which gives security to the great body of the people in the Ottoman dominions, and generally speaking, throughout the east, is to be found in the security afforded by the mountain ranges which intersect many parts of the country. In their valleys, where a genial climate affords plentiful means of subsistence, industry is so far protected by the difficulty of access, as to afford the labourer a tolerable security of enjoying the fruits of his toil. Generally speaking, accordingly, the hill districts of Turkey, both in Europe and Asia, are far better cultivated than the plains; and so strongly had this cause, coupled with the increasing weakness of the Ottoman government, come to operate upon the Greek provinces, that for the thirty years immediately preceding the breaking out of the Greek Revolution, the progress of its inhabitants in numbers and opulence had been very remarkable. But of the magnitude of the oppression to which the cities and plains are subject, and its extraordinary effect in destroying the numbers, and checking the growth of mankind, decisive evidence is to be found in the fact, that the Turkish empire, which in Europe and Asia embraces 815,000 square miles, contains only 25,000,000 inhabitants, being at the rate of 28 to the square mile, certainly not a fifth part of the population it contained in the days of the Roman and Persian empires, and

hardly more than a tenth of what is at this moment to be found in many countries of modern Europe, possessing fewer advantages of climate and soil, but where, nevertheless, all classes of the people enjoy comparative affluence and comfort.*

Amidst the general and melancholy features of misery which characterize the Turkish dominions, it is pleasing to observe some insulated examples of greater prosperity in those situations, which, from their remoteness or other causes, are less exposed to the tyranny of the Turkish soldiers. Bulgaria is a very mountainous country, but highly cultivated, and its inhabitants are active and laborious.† There is a much greater proportion of villages and lands in tillage than in the adjoining countries of Wallachia and Moldavia, in consequence not only of its being less exposed to the ravages of war, but more withdrawn from the oppressions of the Turkish Government, and few districts of Europe exhibit more cultivation, and a greater density of population, than the broad mountain range of the Balkan.‡ In the sequestered valleys of this province, the peasant lives secure in his hut, and enjoys a tolerable certainty of reaping the fruits of his toil. In the island of *Cazos*, in like manner, the inhabitants, though subject to the Grand Seignior, are not oppressed, because, by reason of there being no fort, the Turks do not dwell on the island.§ To this fortunate circumstance alone is to be ascribed *the liberty, tranquillity, and happiness which prevails.* The houses are built of stone, and are neat, roomy, and substantial. Everything in this little island wears an air of industry, security, and comfort. "I have visited," says Savary, "countries on which

* Malte Brun, i. 4, and Humboldt, Nouv. Esp. xi. 55, and App. No. IV.
† Travels in Crimea, 118. ‡ Ibid. § Savary's Greece, 141.

liberal Nature has exhausted all its treasures, *and everywhere have found nations unhappy, not by their own fault, not by the sterility of the soil, but by the vices of Government.* In the midst of slaves crouching beneath the Ottoman yoke, I have found a rock, not three leagues in circumference, on which the Turk has not set his foot, and which is inhabited by a free and happy people."*

Such is a slight sketch of the Turkish empire in Europe; and melancholy as the picture which it exhibits is of the present condition of the human race, it is yet fraught with lessons of no inconsiderable importance. In the misery and wretchedness of the inhabitants of these delightful regions, once the abode of liberty, of wealth, and of happiness, we discern the necessary and never-failing effects of universal ignorance and despotic power upon the prosperity of the human species. We perceive, that, for the want of these blessings, no riches of nature, no advantages of situation, no mildness of climate, can afford any compensation. It is plain, that, under the influence of despotic power, the human species is as wretched and as degraded in the most favourable as in the least favourable situations; in the islands of the Archipelago or the plains of Romelia, as under the rigours and amidst the desolation of a Siberian winter. After comparing the present situation of the Turkish empire, with the bright picture of Greece in the age of Miltiades or Themistocles, on the one hand, and with the situation of the free kingdoms of Europe at the present moment, on the other, we discern the true causes of the welfare or the suffering of the human species: and from the melancholy survey of

* Savary's Greece, 141.

the ruins of national happiness, we should feel a deeper thankfulness for the means of public prosperity which we possess, and for the influence of that religion, by which, so long as its precepts are observed, civilisation has been placed in our countries upon an imperishable foundation.

II.—Egypt.

It is the melancholy task of those who examine the situation of mankind under the dynasties of the east, to repeat, in almost every country, the same detail of oppression, of injustice, and of suffering. Almost everywhere the lower orders of the people are oppressed by their superiors; and it depends upon the degree of this tyranny, whether the numbers of mankind are scanty or numerous: whether the principle of population is absolutely checked by the force of despotic tyranny: or suffered to develope itself, and occasion the multiplication of an indigent and redundant population.

The kingdoms composing the Turkish empire afford the most striking proofs of the truth of this observation: and of these none exhibits a more remarkable example than the kingdom of Egypt. From our earliest years, we have heard of the wealth, the power, and the vast population of this celebrated country; and the Pyramids stand eternal monuments of the opulence which it had attained in the remotest periods of human existence. But on turning to the experience of modern times, a very different spectacle exhibits itself. We behold this magnificent country, on which nature has lavished her richest gifts, languishing under the tyranny of oriental despotism: and the descendants of those multitudes who erected the stupendous monuments of Egyptian power, thinly scattered over the plains which are yet loaded with the riches of an

undecaying soil. Amidst the utmost profusion of the means of subsistence, the peasants are wretched and indigent in the extreme; the scantiness of their numbers, when compared with the riches of nature, affords no alleviation to their sufferings; and they afford a memorable example of the greatest excess of human misery, arising *solely* from the oppression of the poorer classes.*

Upper and Lower Egypt differ much in the number of the inhabitants, but in one respect they are entirely in unison; in the degradation and misery of the people. Their houses are built of mud, with walls hardly rising above the ground; their inmates are for the most part naked,† or clothed only in the most wretched rags.‡ From the poverty which universally prevails, the arts are reduced to the lowest ebb: the production of rose-water, of mats, and of some clumsy carpets, forms the whole of their manufactures.§ "I have seen," says Savary, "a poor woman, who had only a jar and a few mats in the world; some soldiers demanded her tax; and on searching her hovel, discovered a bag of rice, which they carried off. She dashed her child on the ground to save it from starving, and bid its blood be on their heads." ‖ The only dress of the natives is a linen frock dyed blue: of luxuries or comforts of any description they have no conception.¶

Notwithstanding this indigence of the people, it appears certain that the population of Egypt, great as it is, has much declined since the periods of its ancient prosperity. The provinces of Heraclea and Arsinoe are reduced to one-third of their former extent; and

* Savary's Egypt, 519. Sonnini, iii. 25, 274, &c. Legh's Travels in Egypt, 42.

† Sonnini, iii. 25. ‡ Savary, i. 542. § Ibid. i. 521.

‖ Ibid. 528. ¶ De Tott, ii. 68.

every year the sands of Lybia rob Upper Egypt of a portion of its domain.* In traversing the provinces of this country, the traveller beholds the marks of ancient cultivation, in tracts which are now nothing but sand; columns, temples, and the remains of cities appear in ruins in the midst of deserts.† The climate, the soil, the waters, are the same: the laws and system of government only are changed.‡

The population as it exists at present is entirely owing to the unaided bounty of nature. Whatever in other states could be effected only by a government ably formed, and constantly guided by the principles of justice, in Egypt arises from the nature of the soil.§ The riches of its productions satisfies in some measure the rapacity of the governors, and screens the people from the full effects of their tyranny.‖ Nature seems to render labour almost superfluous, so luxuriant is the produce which it spontaneously bears. As soon as the rice in Lower Egypt is cut, the inhabitants sow a species of trefoil, which yields three successive crops before it again resigns its place to the rice. Of these crops the second is the most luxuriant.¶ That portion of Lower Egypt called the *Delta*, exhibits the most extraordinary spectacle of vegetable luxuriance. Everywhere are to be seen the signs of an early cultivation, of an eternal spring, of a fertility incessantly renovated.** Great as the fertility is in this district, it is still greater in the provinces of Upper Egypt. The returns of agriculture have been there estimated at 80 to 1:†† and the most moderate calculations show an average return of 25 or 30 to 1.‡‡ When the

* Savary, i. 519. † Personal knowledge; Niebuhr, i. 77.
‡ Savary, i. 519. § De Tott, ii. 66. ‖ Ibid.
¶ Sonnini, i. 232. ** Ibid. i. 212.
†† Savary, i. 373. ‡‡ Sonnini, iii. 197.

crop yields only 20 to 1, the cultivators complain of the scantiness of their returns.* Even this fertility would easily admit of increase: for great as it is, it is the spontaneous gift of Nature: the means of irrigation which are required in so warm a climate are neglected or lost: ignorant and lazy, the husbandmen know not how to avail themselves of the most fruitful of all soils: yet, notwithstanding this, many crops constantly come to maturity in the same year: so inexhaustible are the riches which Providence has lavished upon mankind.†

The decay and miserable condition of the population will easily be understood, when the oppressions to which they are subjected are considered. In the fifteenth century, Egypt, after all the revolutions which it had undergone, was comparatively rich and populous: but since the fatal æra of Turkish conquest, the tyranny of the Pachas has expelled both industry, riches, and the arts.‡ The exportation of grain was long ago prohibited, which gave a mortal stab to agriculture; the canals filled up, Alexandria became depopulated. This still continued even lately to be the fate of Egypt, nor was grain allowed to be exported but through the medium of the Turkish officers, which were the scenes of endless extortion and abuse.§ Under the Turkish dynasty, this unhappy country has been the theatre of continual wars and revolutions, carried on in the most destructive of all ways, between petty tyrant and tyrant. The anarchy of this monstrous government, like a pestilential wind, has extinguished all energy among the people, and depopulated the cities and the plains.‖ This is more especially the

* Sonnini, 3, 197. † Ibid. ‡ Savary, i. 35.
§ Savary, i. 373. ‖ Ibid. i. 519.

case with Upper Egypt, which, by reason of its vicinity to Cairo, is the theatre of all the revolutions. These revolutions are never espoused by the common people: equally without regret and without hope, they interrupt none of their operations; the Mamelukes dispute the possession of Egypt like so many banditti at variance about the division of a booty.* Each Bey is the governor of a province, and appoints for each a sub-governor. These subaltern governors endeavour to attach to themselves the Mamelukes who are out of employment, with a view to seize on the government themselves.† Wars in this way are continually breaking out among the persons in authority, and these wars are fatal to the tranquillity of the provinces. The victorious party deprives the vanquished of their lands and provinces; the Arabs who have been pillaged join with the Bedouins, who are always ready to favour the malcontents for the hope of plunder, and both descend like torrents from the mountains. The undisciplined troops put against them produce no less havock; the cultivator is pillaged alike by his enemy and his defender. If the Arabs are repulsed, they retire into the desert laden with booty, and look for a new opportunity to renew their ravages.‡

When a civil war breaks out in this way, it is the signal for universal dissension and innumerable feuds. The country is open to plunder and devastation by the Arabs and the Beys: the inhabitants of every village fight with their neighbours: and unbridled licentiousness is carried to its highest pitch.§ A victory, therefore, over the despotic authority in the country, so far

* De Tott, ii. 82. † Ibid. ii. 83. ‡ Savary, i. 521.
§ Sonnini, iii. 238.

from being the signal for a diminution, is but the commencement of an increase of disorders. The fields are abandoned or laid waste: the husbandman forsakes his plough to fly to arms, the flocks are carried off or destroyed, and every sort of provision becomes the prey of the enemy or robbers. The highways, lined with banditti, are shut against communication of every kind; desolation reigns over a region, which, but for its excessive fertility, would be long of repairing these losses. But the soil is unimpaired by the ravages which are committed on its surface: and if the husbandman can only preserve seed sufficient to sow the ground, the produce of next year restores him to the situation in which he stood at their commencement.*

When tranquillity is restored by the victory of any of the contending parties, the peasant is exposed to a less violent but equally oppressive despotism. The cities and villages are subject to a territorial tribute: and the cultivator holds his lands at the will of the master imposed on them by the ruling party.† The Beys levy their tributes with an armed force: during several months in the year each of these tyrants encamps with his forces in the vicinity of the villages within his jurisdiction. After exhausting the subsistence of the countrymen, and wresting from them, by dint of fear and violence, the fruit of their labours, he sits down near another hamlet to exact similar contributions. It is impossible to paint the vexations exercised by these tyrants: the instruments of their oppression are banditti whose crimes have driven them from their country.‡

"The fields which are enriched by the Nile," says Legh,

* Sonnini, iii. 274. † De Tott, ii. 83. ‡ Savary, i. 527.

"teem with plenty: the date trees are loaded with fruit; cattle of every kind, poultry and milk abound in every village: but the wretched Arab is compelled to live on a few lentils and a small portion of bread and water, while he sees his fields plundered and his cattle driven away to gratify the insatiable wants of a mercenary soldiery, and the inordinate claims of a rapacious governor. After having paid the various contributions, and answered the numerous demands made upon him, not a twentieth of the produce of his labour falls to his share: and without the prospect of enjoying the fruits of his toil, the *fellah*, naturally indolent himself, allows his fields to remain uncultivated, conscious that his industry would be but an additional temptation to the extortion of tyranny."*

Lower Egypt, and especially the *Delta*, being more removed from the Arabs, and from the scene of contention among the Mamelukes, is in a much happier situation than the upper country.† The facility with which the country is watered, leaves no part of it uncultivated, and the richness of the soil, by multiplying the harvest, maintains and animates the population.‡ It is accordingly extremely populous: the numbers of villages and cottages with white-washed walls, rising amidst the luxuriant meadows or corn-fields, with which the land is covered, exhibit the most delightful spectacle.§ Nor is the effect of this comparative security less conspicuous on the character of the inhabitants. While the people of Upper Egypt are the most ferocious barbarians that can be conceived, the

* Legh's Journey in Egypt, 42. † De Tott, ii. 85.
‡ Ibid. ii. 62.
§ Savary, passim; and personal knowledge. Sonnini, i. 212.

character of the people in the Delta is mild and gentle. Planted on a fertile soil, and surrounded by plenty, their dispositions have changed: their temper has lost its ferocity; a change to be ascribed to the unbounded gifts of nature, the peace of the country, *and the influence of agriculture*, the first instructor of nations, and the most powerful means of softening the human mind.*

Imagination cannot picture a more beautiful spectacle than these white villages of the Delta, interspersed with palms, banana and orange trees: surrounded by the richest crops of grain: but the miserable appearance of the peasantry evinces how completely the bounty of nature may be counteracted by a bad government. Even now, the population is decreasing, and the peasant, although in so fertile a country, miserably poor: for the exactions of government and its officers leave him nothing to lay out in the improvement and culture of his lands: while the cities are falling into ruin, because the same unhappy restraints render it impossible for the citizens to engage in any sort of lucrative industry.† "Whether under the yoke of the Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabians, or Turks," says Niebuhr, "this country has enjoyed no interval of tranquillity, but has constantly been oppressed by the lieutenants of a distant lord: the sole object of both being that of extorting as large a revenue as possible from the hard hands of the peasant."‡

As in other parts of the Turkish empire, justice is venal to the last degree in Egypt: corruption among the higher orders is open and undisguised: everything may be bought: nor are pains even taken to

* Sonnini, i. 213. † Legh's Journey, 17 and 20. Niebuhr, Vol. i. 174.
‡ Niebuhr's Travels, i. p. 236.

conceal this corruption: the surest proof of the universal degradation of public feeling.*

The first duty, as it is esteemed, and most ardent wish of women, is to have a numerous offspring: the public esteem, and the tenderness of their husbands are measured by their fecundity. Even the poor man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, prays to Heaven for a numerous offspring; and so indispensable is this deemed to happiness, that the barren woman endeavours to indemnify herself by adoption for the injury of nature.† Hence, in whatever indigence the people may be involved, it never has the effect of preventing the frequency of early marriages, which both custom and their religion enjoin; nay, they seek to console themselves by a numerous offspring, for the humiliation of their situation, and the precarious tenure by which they hold their property.‡ Were they certain of reaping the fruits of their toil, this propensity would soon augment the population: but the poor peasant, after bedewing his fields with the sweat of his brow, retires to his miserable hut, and is compelled to relinquish to his oppressors the most valuable part of his harvest.§ With these habits, and in this situation, it may be conceived what scenes of poverty the country must exhibit.‖

From this slight sketch of the situation of the people in Egypt, it is not difficult to perceive the causes to which the misery of mankind is there to be ascribed. It is not owing to the pressure of the num-

* Sonnini, iii. 297. † Savary, i. 187. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. i. 542.

‖ In this account of Egypt, the authorities relied on have been chiefly those who visited the country previous to the late change in the government by the rise of Mahomet Ali: for that event is too recent to have materially affected the action of the principle of increase; and from all accounts it has done anything rather than improve the condition of the people.

bers of the people on the limits of human subsistence, for the existing population is much within those limits: it is not owing to the laws of Nature, for these laws were the same in the comparatively prosperous and more populous periods of antiquity: it is owing solely to the influence of an erroneous religion, and the tyranny of a despotic government. It is by the combined influence of these causes, that a population has been engendered, for whom, in existing circumstances, there is no adequate maintenance: that habits of multiplication have been given to the people, without any regard to the means which the poorer classes have of rearing a family: and that the total absence of all artificial wants has removed the only barrier which could restrain the propensity to early marriage, which custom and religion have thus sanctioned. It has happened here, as in other despotic countries, that the same tyranny which has banished all ideas of comfort, and all means of elevation from the labouring classes, has at the same time crushed every attempt at improvement, and circumscribed all the sources of industry or subsistence; and thus the people have been reduced to the lowest pitch of human suffering, that of being shackled on the one hand by the extortions of a despotic government, and pressed on the other by a redundant and continually increasing population. And society in this unfortunate country exhibits the singular spectacle which *à priori* we should have considered impossible, but which experience shows us is too frequently realized, of the propensity to increase, operating with the *most* force, when there is the *least* scope afforded for the subsistence of the people. In such circumstances, want or disease form the only limitations to the increase in the numbers of

mankind; a melancholy state of things in a country abounding with all that is fitted to give ease and comfort to the poorer ranks; and from which we may conclude with the observation which the sight of this suffering has extorted from every traveller, *that good laws will do more for the welfare of the people than the utmost profusion in the riches of Nature.* *

III.—Barbary.

There is not a more remarkable instance recorded in history of the destruction of the human species than took place in Africa upon the destruction of the Roman empire. "It is computed," says Gibbon, "that, during the reign of the Emperor Justinian, and the wars of Belisarius, upwards of 5,000,000 persons perished in Africa alone by war; and the ravages of the plague probably carried off a still larger number."† "The present state of Africa," says Dr Robertson, "confirms the testimony of the contemporary authors,‡ who describe the destruction of mankind at that period. Many of the most flourishing and populous cities with which it was filled were so entirely ruined, that no vestiges remain to point out where they were situated. That fertile territory which sustained the Roman empire, still lies in a great measure uncultivated; and that province which Victor in his barbarous Latin called *Speciositas totius terræ florentis,* is now the retreat of pirates and banditti."§

In fact, except some districts on the sea coast, Barbary is almost a desert. It is a rare thing to meet two or three villages in a day. ‖ Nevertheless, the

* Niebuhr, i. 37; Savary, i. 542. † Gibbon, vii. 424, note.
‡ Procopius, c. 18; Byz. Script. i. 315. § Charles V. i. 211, 212.
‖ Poiret's Letters on Barbary, 336.

country is one of the richest in the world, and is capable of maintaining an immense population.* It is a curious and instructive fact to inquire into the causes of this extraordinary and continued diminution of the number of the human species; a decline which is still going forward in the present day.†

The cause is to be found in the tyranny of the government. The supreme authority, as is universally known, is a despotism; and the same system pervades every branch of the administration. Every chief has as much authority within his *douare* or village as the Dey of Algiers. He may plunder the inhabitants, assassinate them, carry away their flocks, destroy their houses, and indulge in the greatest excesses of cruelty; as long as he pays the tribute to government, he is sure not to be disturbed.‡ The farmer is in continual dread of being plundered, either by his own chief, or by one of a neighbouring nation.§ Perpetual wars, conducted in the most ferocious manner, joined to the instability and tyranny of the ruling power, convert the finest country imaginable into a solitude.‖ It is even said to be a maxim of government, that in order to rule the people properly, there should always be a stream of blood flowing from the throne: every kind of cruelty and injustice is systematically practised; and the same system descends through all the governors and inferior authorities.¶ To be rich is esteemed the greatest of all crimes in the eyes of the Barbary princes; and such of their subjects as have acquired property to any great amount, are seldom allowed to enjoy it: it is either extorted by the hand of power, or unjustly confiscated under the colour of

* Poiret's Letters on Barbary, 336. † Shaw's Barbary.
‡ Poiret, 334. § Ibid. 340. ‖ Ibid. 55. ¶ Ibid. 193, 333.

law.* The efforts of industry are thus completely paralysed, and the labours of the people are almost entirely confined to the supply of their immediate wants. Those who are in affluence assume the appearance of indigence, or, for still greater security, deposit their wealth in the bosom of the earth. The forms of justice are indeed observed, but their substance is almost entirely gone. †

Artificial wants of any kind are utterly unknown among the labouring classes of the people. Remarkably abstemious in their diet, they can subsist upon a very small quantity of the simplest nourishment.‡ Those habits of indulgence which are the great springs of commerce, are either wholly unknown among them, or at least restrained from being openly gratified by the lawless acts of extortion to which every opulent individual is invariably exposed.§

The natives of Barbary are indolent in the highest degree, unless when they are roused by some accidental circumstance. They may be seen in great numbers sitting on the ground, or leaning against a wall, in complete apathy and silence. So extremely averse are they to standing or walking, that if two meet they instantly sit down. ‖ Their poverty is everywhere extreme; they are utterly ignorant of cookery, eat no bread, and water is their only drink. Their huts shelter them from the weather, but are destitute of any sort of accommodation.¶ Cultivation is, as might be expected, under such a government, in the most backward state. The only ploughing which they employ is a species of scratching six inches deep, frequently done with a wooden plough.

* Poiret, 334. † Ibid. Shaw, 197 ‡ Ibid. 74, 75.
§ Ibid. 55. ‖ Ibid. 55. ¶ Ibid. 75.

Their only manure is the annual burning of the stubble; yet with this wretched cultivation, the soil yields every vegetable in the greatest abundance. Were the husbandman protected in the exercise of his labour, it would afford infinitely more than the wants of the population require.*

The habit of early marriages is universal over the whole country. Women are frequently mothers at eleven or twelve, and grandmothers at twenty-two or twenty-three: they generally see several generations. Their condition is everywhere degraded, and they are subjected to the most laborious employments, which their husbands are too lazy to undertake.† There is no distinction of rank, except what arises from the temporary possession of office: and so precarious is the tenure of the wealth which it affords considered, that a governor or judge of a town would never regard himself or his daughters degraded by marrying a common artificer.‡ It is the distinguishing and odious characteristic of eastern despotism, as Dr Robertson has well observed, that *it annihilates all other ranks of men, in order to exalt the monarch:* that it leaves nothing to the former, while it gives everything to the latter: that it endeavours to fix in the minds of those who are subject to it, the idea of no relation between them, but that of a master and a slave: the former destined to command and punish, the latter formed to tremble and to obey.§

It seems unnecessary to observe, that the scanty population and miserable condition of the Barbary states is thus to be imputed to the tyrannical nature

* Shaw's Barbary, p. 72. Poiret, p. 326.
† Ibid.
‡ Shaw, 84, Poiret, 329.
§ Charles V. i. 202.

of the government, and not to anything necessarily inherent in their physical or moral condition.

V.—Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor.

The rich and beautiful provinces which compose this vast country, being subject to the authority of one government, exhibit the same political appearances, and demonstrate the same political truths.

Of the vast population of Asia Minor and the coast of Syria in ancient times, we have the most abundant proofs in all the writers of antiquity who have treated of these interesting countries. The Anabasis of Xenophon speaks of innumerable large and flourishing towns which lay in the route of the ten thousand: and to this day the ruins of these cities astonish the traveller, often concealed under the shade of luxuriant and perennial foliage. When the English fleet in 1801 was stationed on the coast of Asia Minor, some sailors accidentally set fire to a thick wood, which spread to a great extent along the sea coast: and when the trees were consumed, the whole coast appeared studded at intervals with the ruins of cities, temples, and palaces, which had been concealed for centuries beneath the forests of the east.* At the foot of Mount Ida :† on the shores of Palestine ;‡ and in all the extensive valleys which composed Asia Minor, the ruins of a vast population in former times are so obvious, as to have attracted the attention of every traveller. The modern villages are generally placed on the ruins of an ancient city: and the traveller before he enters one of the present burghs, passes for miles through the

* Personal knowledge. † Clarke, iii. 371.

‡ Clarke, ii. passim, and Mariti, ii. passim.

mounds which mark the extent of streets and dwellings in remote ages.*

At present the population is both thinly scattered and miserably indigent.† The wretched inhabitants bear every mark of poverty in their persons, in their dwellings, and in their dress. A little flat cake of barley, a few onions and water, constitute their ordinary food. In the mountains of Lebanon they gather acorns: and to such a pitch of poverty are they reduced, that they esteem rancid fat and strong oil as delicious, which in other countries would be reckoned unwholesome food.‡ Their whole industry is limited to the supply of their immediate wants: to procure a little bread, a few onions, a coarse blue shirt, and a bit of woollen cloth, constitutes the utmost extent of their desires.§ A waggon or a cart is never to be seen;‖ and the whole art of cultivation is in the rudest state. The plough is often no more than the branch of a tree, and the husbandman is destitute of almost all the implements which are employed in an improved system of culture.¶ Throughout the whole Turkish dominions in Asia, the villages are meanly built, and exhibit, like their inhabitants, every mark of poverty and wretchedness: during the winter months the people and the cattle absolutely live together for the sake of warmth, which their houses are so incapable of affording.** A bridge is seldom to be seen, unless it is the work of the Romans, which has resisted the decay of a thousand years: from the time you cross the Dardanelles till you arrive at Delhi,

* Kinneir's Account of Persia, Fraser's Persia, and Buckingham.
† Volney, ii. 335. ‡ Ibid. 413. § Ibid. ‖ Ibid. ii. 419.
¶ Ibid. ii. 413. ** Ibid. ii. 335.

you will hardly ever meet with a road passable for wheel carriages.*

This extreme poverty of the people is not owing either to the sterility of the earth, or the redundance of the population. "The soil," says Chateaubriand, "in the plains of Judea, is extremely fertile; but owing to the tyranny of the Turks, it yields hardly any thing but weeds. Here and there you see a village generally in ruins."† There are few villages in Asia Minor,‡ which is the more extraordinary, as the soil and the climate are both eminently favourable; and, as in ancient times, the country unquestionably supported a numerous population, whose opulence is still apparent in the imperishable works which they have erected. The soil is loose, and easily yields to the plough: and the quantity of ground which might be brought into cultivation for corn, or pasture for cattle, is very great; but it is neglected from want of persons to till it.§

Syria contains 2,500,000 people, and 5250 square leagues, or 476 to a square league, not a fifth part of that which now exists in the British islands. "So feeble a population in a country so fertile," says Volney, "may well excite our astonishment, which will be still increased if we consider its population in ancient times, of which the innumerable ruins and traces of cultivation afford ample proof. And yet, from the advantages of its climate, it is capable of supporting double or triple the number which could be maintained in an equal extent of any European state."‖

The cause of this remarkable difference between the numbers of the people, and the capacities which the country affords for subsistence, is to be found in the

* Lamartine, ii. 137, 139. † Chateaubriand, i. 367. ‡ Clarke, iii 186.
§ Walpole's MS. Clarke, iii. 197. ‖ Volney, ii. 366–368.

tyranny of the Turkish government. The dominions of the Sultan being too vast for a single administration, he is obliged to divide it into small governments ruled in the same manner as the united empire. These are the provinces under the Pachas. Their territories again are subdivided among a series of subalterns, down to the very lowest employments. In this gradation of authority, the object in view being universally the same, the means employed never change their nature. *Absolute power is transmitted as absolutely to all the delegates.* The sabre of the Sultan passes to the Vizier, from the Vizier to the Pacha, from the Pacha to the Motsallan, thence to the Aga, and even the lowest Delibasha, so that it is within the reach of the vilest retainer to office, and descends on the meanest heads.*

As the Pacha is absolute in his government, his first law, on entering upon it, is to devise ways to procure money as rapidly as possible.† Uncertain of to-morrow, the governors treat their provinces as mere transient possessions, and take care to make no improvement for the benefit of their successors: on the contrary, they exhaust the territory, *and strive to reap if possible in one day the fruit of many years.* If such irregularities are punished, the whole goes to the Sultan, not the injured people: and for this reason the government is far from disapproving of a system of robbery and plunder which it finds so profitable.‡ The taxes are levied by farmers, who subdivide their share to lesser delegates, and these again still lower, till at last the lowest farms come to be mere villages. The Pacha lets to the highest bidder, and so do all his subordinate functionaries, who seek to squeeze a profit out of

* Volney, ii. 375. † Ibid. ii. 378-9. ‡ Ibid. ii. 381.

their offices. Hence the avidity and extortion of all these tax-gatherers, who are sure of being supported by authority.* Though it is a law of the empire, that the miri or tax shall not be raised, the Pachas too often find indirect means of doing this. They exact the half, nay, sometimes two-thirds of the crop by means of their impositions, and monopolize the seed and cattle, so that the cultivators are forced to purchase them back at their own price. If the season fails they exact the same, and in default of corn, seize his effects, though his person is free.† The sabre imposes silence on the peasants after all these exactions. In consequence of this accumulation of miseries, the poorer inhabitants are ruined: and, being unable to pay the tax, become a burden on the village, or fly to the cities; *but the tax remains unalterable;* and falls on the remaining inhabitants, whose burden, though at first light, at last becomes insupportable.‡ From these causes the people, who are denied the enjoyment of the fruit of their labour, restrain their industry to the supply of their necessary wants: the husbandman only sows to preserve himself from starving; the artisan labours only to bring up his family, and if he has any surplus, carefully conceals it. Thus the arbitrary sway of the Sultan, through his delegates, is everywhere fatal to agriculture, the arts, and population. §

There is no country in the world in which justice is more venal than in the Asiatic dominions of Turkey. The Grand Cadi names the judges to the capital cities, who appoint all the inferior Cadis. Like all employments under government, they are sold to the highest bidder; and the purchaser seeks to reimburse

* Volney, ii. iii. 78–9. † Ibid. ii. 409. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. 379.

himself for his outlay by the extortions of office. Yet these judges decide all questions of property among their fellow-citizens, and from their decisions there is no appeal.* Corruption is habitual and general: the inferior judges, having no dread of revision, indulge a thousand opportunities of injustice: an equal distribution of justice is nowhere to be found in the Turkish empire.†

The merchants of this country are also grievously oppressed. What can we do, say the Syrian monks? If we become merchants, after having worked for thirty years, the Aga comes, the Pacha, or the Cadi, we are brought to trial without the shadow of a crime, witnesses are suborned, we are bastinadoed, plundered, and turned naked into the world. If we become cultivators, our condition would be still worse; for the Aga oppresses them, the soldier pillages them, the Arab robs them.‡

To such a length is the oppression of the Turkish authorities carried, that all the soldiers who convey orders are in fact licensed robbers. Their ordinary salutation on entering a village are, "*dogs, rabble, bread, coffee, tobacco.*"§ Such are the effects of the insecurity of property arising from private robbers, that in the districts exposed to the Arabs the countryman *durst not sow without his musket in his hand*;‖ and this calamity falls most heavily on those countries which are bestowed as an apanage, and those which border on the desert.¶ There the sub-delegates have imposed taxes on every article, and to such a length has the oppres-

* Volney, ii. 389. † Ibid. 391. Chateaubriand, ii. p. 173.
‡ Volney, ii. 355. § Ibid. 409. ‖ Ibid. 413.
¶ Chateaubriand, ii. p. 174. Volney, ii. 412.

sion been carried within the last half century, that the most extraordinary symptoms of decline and depopulation have appeared."*

As might be expected in a country subject to such oppression, usury is universal and destructive in Syria and Asia Minor. When the peasants are in want of money to buy grain and cattle, they must mortgage the whole or part of their future crop, generally at an undervalue. The most moderate interest is 12 per cent.; that most usually exacted is from 20 to 30.†

In the interior of the country are neither roads, canals, nor even bridges over most of the torrents. The peasants increase the ruin which nature brings about to keep out the Turkish cavalry. A cart or a waggon is never to be seen, in consequence of the universal dread of their being seized by the minions of government, and the proprietors suffering so heavy a loss at one stroke. ‡ The ground is rarely tilled by oxen; *they would bespeak too much riches;* and hence the difficulty of procuring beef in Syria. §

Universally the greatest ignorance prevails, even among the higher orders. ‖ Limited by the tyranny to which they are subjected to the animal wants of our nature, each family manufactures its own clothes, has a portable mill to grind corn, and this is all that they require. Being ignorant of artificial wants, they have no desire for greater enjoyments: and ask a stranger who speaks to them on their poverty, *what good would more do?* This extreme ignorance, not only in useful information, but in the most ordinary

* Chateaubriand, ii. p. 173. Volney, ii. 412.
† Volney, ii. 412. ‡ Ibid. ii. 418–419. § Ibid. ii. 413.
‖ Mariti's Trav. ii. passim. Volney, ii. 455.

arts, is, in the first instance, doubtless, owing to the want of printing; but the ultimate cause is to be found in the government, which not only does not encourage the propagation of knowledge, but does its utmost to stifle it in the bud.*

The condition of the people is more comfortable over all Asia Minor in the towns than in the country: † and the same may be observed throughout all Syria. ‡ The Greeks flock to the great cities, the more easily to avoid the means of oppression practised by the Turkish governors, as they acquire strength from their numbers, and their wealth is less conspicuous in the midst of a crowd. § Hence artisans and manufacturers are not so oppressed as the cultivators: and this is the true reason of the superior wealth, population, and comfort of the cities above the country, which is observable through every part of the Turkish empire. ‖

The real cause of the indolence with which the orientals in general, and the Syrians in particular, have so often been reproached, is to be found not in the warmth of the climate, but in the nature of the government. To awaken activity there must be objects in view: to maintain it the hope of arriving at enjoyments. But both these incitements are awanting to the inhabitants of these regions. What hope of enjoyment have they equivalent to the trouble they must take? What can be expected but indolence in a country where the merchant lives in a perpetual dread of extortion, and the peasant wears ragged clothes, and puts on a melancholy face for fear of plunder. ¶

* Volney, ii. 455. † Walpole MS. Clarke's Travels, iii. 186.
‡ Volney, ii. 415. § Clarke, iii. 186.
‖ Olivier, i. 201. Clarke, iii. 106. Volney, ii. 415.
¶ Volney, ii. 474–479.

By the laws of the Turkish empire, when a father dies the estate results back to the Sultan, and must be redeemed at a high rate. From this cause, and the innumerable extortions to which it is exposed, arises any indifference to landed property, which is fatal to agriculture. Everywhere the preference is given to property in money, as it is more easily hid from the rapine of a despot.* The lawyers are almost the only landholders: nor do we anywhere observe in the Turkish dominions that *multitude of little proprietors* which constitute the strength of the tributary countries, particularly the Druzes and Maronites, *who are so strongly attached to their estates,* that it is rare to hear of an alienation among them; who are possessed of rights which their rulers dare not violate, and who raise the stipulated tribute upon themselves without the intervention of the Turkish soldiery.†

To complete the misfortunes of this unhappy country, superstition and custom conspire to induce a population for whom there is no support. Sterility here, as in most other parts of the east, is considered as serious a reproach as it was in ancient times. The greatest blessing you can wish for a young girl is, that she may soon have a husband and a numerous family. From this prejudice they hasten marriages to such a degree, that it is not rare to see girls of nine or ten married to boys of twelve or thirteen; under circumstances which afford little room for the comfortable maintenance of an enlarged population.‡

From the preceding observations it is easy to perceive, that Syria and Asia Minor exhibit the examples of countries in which, from the influence of pre-

* Volney, ii. 403. † Ibid. ii. 403 and 412. ‡ Volney, ii. 486.

judice and the oppressions of Government, the principle of increase is unlimited in its operation: and where, at the same time, the obstacles to industry are so powerful, as to prevent any considerable addition to the numbers of the people. In these unhappy countries, accordingly, the human race appears in the most melancholy of all situations: where the same tyranny which annihilates all attempts at laborious industry, withdraws, at the same time, all the limitations which Nature has imposed upon the spring of population; where the labouring classes are necessarily few and yet miserable. Under a more equitable system of government, and beneath the influence of a purer religion, these delightful regions might maintain ten times their present population, while every individual who composed it enjoyed, to a far greater extent than they now do, the necessaries and luxuries of life.

That there is nothing theoretical in such an opinion is proved by the example of the tributary states of the *Maronites* and the *Druzes;* which, being exempt from the baneful influence of Turkish tyranny, present a spectacle of public happiness almost unknown in the other regions of the east. In them the people live dispersed in villages, hamlets, and even detached houses, which is never the case in the plains of Syria:* a sure mark of a fearless confidence in individual security which arises from the enjoyments of a free Government. They all live frugally, without many wants, and ignorant of the inventions of luxury. As a nation they are poor like other mountaineers: *but no man wants necessaries:* the few beggars who are to be seen come from the sea coast. The nobles

* Volney, ii. 218.

live like the peasants, with a slight difference of food and clothing; and, though much respected, they enjoy no exclusive privileges.* The land is held in freehold, free of all burdens whatsoever, except the annual miri or rent.† The whole nation consists of cultivators: every man improves the little domain which he possesses, or farms it with his own hands.‡ Property is held sacred as in Europe:§ the Turkish tribute, being levied by the people themselves, the gathering is made without expense, and free of all those galling circumstances which attend the collection by the Turkish soldiers. The people, as they themselves say, "fear not lest the Aga or the Pacha should send soldiers to pillage their houses, carry off their families, and give them the bastinado." Security and freedom reign among these mountains: a delightful spectacle, on which the eye reposes as on a green spot, amidst the rapine and desolation with which it is surrounded.‖

The form of the government amongst these tribes is a mixture of aristocracy and democracy. Every man who is major, and has the reputation of being of approved courage and sound understanding, is entitled to give his vote in their national assemblies; but if the governor is a man of ability, he is in effect absolute: an evil which arises from the want of fixed laws; the radical source of disorder among the Asiatic states. Still, however, the general assemblies of the people may be made on certain occasions, and this preserves the independent spirit by which they are distinguished.¶

* Volney, ii. 18.
† Ibid. ii. 79.
‡ Mariti, ii. p. 34. Volney, ii. 18.
§ Ibid.
‖ Volney, ii. 74.
¶ Ibid. ii. 67.

The population among the Maronites is about 110,000, which is spread over a country of 150 square leagues; or 760 to the square league.* The Druzes amount to 150,000, and dwell in a country which extends to 110 square leagues; which yields 1090 persons to the square league, considerably more than double of all Syria, though their district is the most rugged and inhospitable of all Asia Minor. When the rocky and mountainous nature of the soil is considered, this population is great indeed; nor can it be imputed to any other cause *but the security which the people enjoy in their persons and their properties.*† This has been the original cause of the great density of inhabitants in these rocky regions; and it has doubtless been increased since by the frugal habits of the people, and the emigration from the Turkish provinces.‡

Exempt from the tyranny of the Turkish government, the Maronites and Druzes have acquired an active, energetic spirit.§ Much native knowledge and information prevails among them; nor is there that humiliating difference between the rich and the poor which extinguishes all hope in the latter. The Emir himself is a plain country gentleman.‖ Almost all the people are cultivators, either as farmers or proprietors: *every man lives on his little inheritance,* improving his mulberry trees and vineyard. It appears from their records, that at first the country was, as in Europe, in the hands of a few great proprietors; but, with a view to render them more productive, the great landholders have been gradually induced to sell part of them, and let leases, *which subdivision, by multiplying the numbers of persons interested in the*

* Volney, ii, 19. † Ibid. 74. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. 74.
‖ Ibid. ii. 83.

*public weal, has been the great cause of the prosperity of the state.** Some traces, however, of the former inequality still subsist, and wherever it is to be found it produces the most injurious effects.†

As if to demonstrate that it is in consequence of the errors of man, and not of the laws of Nature, that the misery in Asia Minor and Syria has arisen, unbounded suffering is to be seen in the rich plains where the existing population is not a tenth part of what the country could maintain; while the traces of happiness are to be found only in those districts where the numbers of mankind have nearly approached the utmost verge of human subsistence, but where, amidst the bare mountains of Lebanon, the spirit of freedom has been reared, and the blessings of independence secured. While the Syrian languishes in the midst of the utmost profusion of natural plenty, the Maronite, though surrounded by a far denser population, enjoys his rocky soil, and draws from his little domain the means of supporting a frugal and industrious life. The example of these two states, is well worthy the consideration of those who conceive that the greater part of the misery which humanity exhibits, is to be imputed to the necessary and unavoidable pressure of population upon the means of subsistence; and who have not attended to the influence of government, in preventing the adaptation of the increase of the human species to the varying circumstances in which society is placed.

Under the mild and consuetudinary despotism of the Chinese empire, the division of land among the poorer classes tends only to the production of a numerous and indigent population. Among the Druzes and the Maronites, on the other hand, we

* Volney, ii. 63. † Ibid.

perceive the same division of land, when accompanied by security of property and national freedom, engendering an active, industrious, and comfortable people. Beneath the despotism of the Chinese empire, it is considered only as affording the means of subsistence, because the existing institutions prevent any other desires from being developed: under the free government of the Druzes, it awakens the active spirit and the long foresight, which are fitted for the regulation of the principles of increase, because that government gives room for the growth of such dispositions. The distribution of land is the greatest of all blessings, or the greatest of all curses, according to the political situation of the people in whom it is prevalent: but it is ever to be recollected, that it is this difference of political situation which changes its effects: and that it lies upon the people themselves, to render it the means of conferring happiness or misery upon mankind.

IV.—India.

From the earliest periods the great peninsula of India has been celebrated for the variety and riches of its productions, the wealth of its cities, and the greatness of its population. For a series of ages the manners of the country have undergone no material change. The descriptions of Bernier are precisely applicable to the present day: and as far as the researches of modern times have gone, they have met everywhere the same fabric of civil society, and the same tenor of religious institutions. "From age to age," says Maurice, "from father to son, through a hundred generations, the same uniformity of manners and cast of character prevail: inexterminable by

the sword, unalterable by the example of their conquerors."*

Through all this long period the *condition of the people* appears to have remained the same. They have in every age been the subject on which the vices and the rapacity of the higher orders have been exercised: whom the institution of casts has depressed, whom the priests have deceived, whom the rajahs have plundered. At the present time, the habits and condition of the people over the whole extent of the peninsula mark but too strongly the lengthened and immemorial oppressions to which they have been subjected. The mass of the population are everywhere in a state of the most extreme poverty; infinitely worse fed, clothed, and lodged than the peasantry in any nation of Europe.† The great body of the people, indeed, may be regarded *as altogether without property* in every part of the country.‡ Whatever may be the produce of their labour, the condition of the peasant is nearly the same: he is universally poor: for the continual exactions of his superiors leave him nothing but the necessaries of life. The house, the clothing, and implements of every kind belonging to a Hindoo labourer, would probably not sell for L.1 Sterling,§—often they are not worth a rupee.‖ Their dwellings consist of wretched hovels, made of materials not fit for fuel: their clothing of a few rags hardly sufficient to protect them even in that sunny climate. The use of animal food is almost universally unknown, as, in truth, it is not only forbidden by

* Maurice's India, 5.

† Tennant's India, ii. 342. Buchanan's Account of India, p. 41, passim. Tone's Account of the Mahrattas.

‡ Tone, p. 72. Tennant, i. 86. § Tennant, i. 86.

‖ Ibid. ii. 184. Heber's Travels in India, iii. 277.

their religion, but beyond the reach of the poor. Fermented liquors are never drank: they eat millet, pulse, or bad rice, instead of the wholesome grain which constitutes the food of the European cultivator.* Wheat is raised only for the higher orders; and such is the poverty of the people, that they can hardly purchase a savouring of salt for their humble repasts.†

The climate has no doubt some influence on the wants and habits of the lower orders. The style of life to which the Hindoos are accustomed is not attended by the suffering which it would denote in Europe. Clothing is hardly necessary for eight months in the year; drink is unknown beyond the simple draught of water; and the simplicity of their food enables them to subsist on vegetables and a little grain. An Hindoo feels himself comfortable on the same fare on which an Englishman would starve.‡

The average wages of labourers are from L. 2, 7s. to L.2, 10s. a year: and the earnings of a whole family may amount to 7s. 6d., or three rupees a month; a sum barely sufficient to provide them with the necessaries of life.§ The average price of rice is 1s. the eighty-two pounds, or a penny the seven pounds. Wages being three halfpence a day, the value in rice of what a labourer earns is ten pounds and a half. Now a labouring man consumes five pounds a day himself: it may be conceived, therefore, the indigence which must exist when ten or eleven pounds is divided among a whole family. Yet rice is by far the cheapest food known in this country, or perhaps which can be raised in any part of the world.¶

* Tennant, ii. 342. Heber, iii. 277.

† Buchanan's Account of the Mysore. Tennant ii. 184.

‡ Tennant, i. 86. Heber, iii. 277.

§ Remarks on India, 65. Account of the Agric. of Bengal, passim.

¶ Remarks on the Agriculture of Bengal, p. 237.

It may readily be imagined, that, in a country in which the great body of the people are in a state of such poverty, the use of manufactures is extremely limited, and in fact confined to the higher orders. The labouring classes, having no vent for their produce, have no motive to exertion; for it is on the number of the manufacturers and artisans that the encouragement of the cultivator must in every country depend. As it is, so little market is afforded for their produce; that the condition of the farmers is frequently worse than that of those who work for them. In the British provinces, security from rapine is beginning to produce its usual concomitant, artificial wants, and the increasing taste for luxuries has in many places become very conspicuous, and cultivation in many places is prodigiously on the increase. * Though the wages of labour, however, are so low, they are in ordinary years adequate to supply the workman and his family with food: and to this cause in some measure may the extraordinary tendency to increase be ascribed; since the poor obtain the means of subsistence, and nothing more.†

The agriculture of Hindostan is for the most part wretched in the extreme. The rudeness of their implements, the slovenliness of their practice, and the total ignorance of the most simple principles of the science, are equally remarkable. Manure is almost unknown in most districts: the system of rotation, or the use of green crops, is nowhere to be seen: enclosures and artificial grasses have not been adopted, and several kinds of grain are frequently sown in one field, to the ruin of all. The average size of farms in Bengal, as appears from the official returns laid before

* Heber's India, iii. 274, 284, 351.

† Remarks on the Agriculture of Bengal, 247, 253.

government, is six acres to each.* Nowhere is anything like wealth in the farmers, or extensive undertakings or active improvement to be seen. The cultivators are on the same footing as the metayers of France: they receive their grain from the landlord, who generally makes a profit on it, and furnish the labour themselves. Their labourers are paid partly in money, partly in land, which for the most part consists of a proportion of waste as well as arable: but from the extreme indigence of all classes, they are unable to draw more from this land than a bare subsistence.†

The natives are commonly unambitious, and extremely averse to severe labour. Satisfied with the produce of his field, the Ryot will neither apply to any other employment, nor take in more land. If he obtains the necessaries of life himself, and wherewithal to pay his rent, he is content.‡ The labourer acquires the same habits: though the wages are low, a subsistence may be obtained without continued labour; the people seldom work more than five hours a day, and half the year is holidays; and both the artisans and the peasants, though often idle, contrive to obtain sufficient to support their physical existence. §

So great is the indigence among the artisans, that the employer is obliged in every case to advance a certain proportion of the price of the manufacture, in order to enable the manufacturer to live while he is engaged in completing it. Unable to wait the market, or anticipate its demand, he can only follow his trade when called to it by the demands of his customers; when these fail, he is obliged to take to some other mode of subsistence, and agriculture is the general re-

* Remarks on the Agriculture of Bengal. Tennant, ii. 194, 203, &c.
† Tennant, i. 86. ‡ Ibid. i. 342.
§ Remarks on the Agriculture of Bengal, 72. Heber, iii. 276.

source by which the unemployed manufacturers gain a precarious livelihood. *

Over the greater part of India, the produce is at least three times what it is on a similar extent in England, even under the present wretched system of management; for the warmth of the climate yields always two, often three crops, and the produce of one harvest is greater in the former country than in the latter. One acre will yield from 13 to 14 quarters of wheat in India annually; whereas in England, 3 quarters is the average of the whole country, and 4 is considered as a large allowance. †

When this extreme fertility of the soil is considered, the population of Hindostan is small; and it is impossible to travel through the country without being sensible of the truth of this observation. In some of the richer parts of Bengal, indeed, the cultivation is uninterrupted, but in general it surrounds for a short space the villages, while the plain at a little distance is left in a state of nature. It has been computed by some at 134,000,000, by others at 201,000,000: but when its rich soil and triple crops are considered, it is certainly capable of maintaining more than three times even the largest of these numbers. Though the population, therefore, is everywhere redundant, it is greatly within the capabilities of subsistence which the soil and the country afford. ‡ In the upper provinces innumerable ruins attest the vast extent of the population, now destroyed by foreign invasions, which existed in former times.

Nor is this small population, as compared with the means of subsistence, the result of any restraint which

* Tennant, ii. 18.

† Remarks on Agric. of Bengal; Tennant, ii. 184, &c. ante, I. 65.

‡ Martin's British Colonies, i. 1 and 51, and Heber, i. 417 and 253.

the habits of the people impose upon the principle of increase. On the contrary, there is no country in the world in which this principle operates with greater force, or where marriages are contracted earlier, or more universally.* Everywhere, the young women are married before their sixteenth, and young men before their eighteenth year. Parents are even enjoined to marry their children before their eleventh year; and, from the influence of superstition, this injunction is obeyed wherever the means of carrying it into effect can be obtained.†

The deficiency in the wealth of the country is as remarkable as the scanty population. The territories of the company have greatly improved since they were protected by the English powers from the ravages of their native sovereigns, and the endless extortions of the Mahratta governments; yet the revenue which they derive from them, extending over a country which contains in the territories of the East India Company alone, 102,000,000 inhabitants, and consisting of eight-tenths of the rent of the land, amounts only to L. 19,000,000 Sterling. Under the worst sort of management in England, they would yield five times that sum.‡

The peculiarities in the condition and habits of the Indian people; the small amount of the revenue and of the land under tillage; the redundance of the population when compared with the demand for labour, and its scantiness when compared with the capabilities of the soil; all arise from the *government*, the *religion*, and *existing institutions*.

* Buchanan's Account of Mysore, p. 37 and 126, and Heber, iii. 351.

† Sketches of the Hindoos, 213.

‡ Tennant, ii. 184. Martin, i. p. 1 and 50, 51, and Heber, iii. 276, 277.

I. The *civil government* of India has, from the earliest times to which history or tradition reaches, been a despotism of the most oppressive description. To those who are habituated to the regularity, the security, and the moderation which pervades even the most arbitrary governments of Europe, the details of the exactions, of the cruelty, and the ravages of the Indian sovereigns, appear almost inconceivable. The Hindoo jurisprudence establishes a slavery more complex than any yet recorded in history. The prerogatives of the magistrate and of the rajah, fortified on every side, leave no room for individual or national freedom. Pure despotism, under the veil of theocracy, has, from the earliest ages, been the only government of Hindostan.* The Hindoo laws recognize no less than *fifteen* legitimate modes of acquiring slaves.† But these servants are in general well treated: the gentleness of the Hindoo character has softened the rigour of their laws. A stranger can seldom distinguish between the condition of the slave from any other member of the family. The cultivators are, in a certain sense, *astricti glebæ*, but the slavery is altogether unlike the odious servitude of the West India islands, it more nearly resembles the kindly relation which subsisted in Europe between the lord of the manor and the villains who cultivated his domains.‡

It is not from the weight of domestic servitude, it is from the rigour of military government, and the rapaciousness of a licentious army, that the misery of the people has arisen. The Mogul government, at no period, offered full security to a tributary prince: still

* Martin, i. 135.
† Hindoo Laws, c. vii. §. i.
‡ Tennant, i. 135.

less to his vassals: but to the peasants it afforded hardly any protection at all.* It was a continued tissue of treachery, violence, insurrection, and military punishment. The rents to Government, which consisted of at least eight-tenths of all that was drawn by the landholders themselves, rendered the sovereigns in fact the proprietors of the country. The landholders, as we would call them, were in fact nothing more than the factors whom they appointed to receive their rents; and who were permitted to retain a tenth of what they drew as a remuneration to themselves.† These rents were levied, and under the native governments still are levied, twice a year, by a merciless banditti, under the name of an army, who pillage, burn, and destroy almost as much as they extort for their employers.‡ These licentious tyrants chase the unfortunate peasants, on many occasions, into the woods, and live at free quarters on their property. Any attempt at resistance calls forth instant and sanguinary vengeance. Under such a system, which is uniformly and invariably practised wherever the native powers still hold their sway, it is not surprising that agriculture decays,—although hardly any culture is requisite to second the riches of Nature,—and that commerce and the arts are banished from the realm.§

The Mahrattas exhibit an example of the system which was everywhere followed in India prior to the establishment of the British power. Imagination can hardly conceive the oppressions which are there systematically practised on the peasantry. Every situa-

* Tennant, i. 302. Heber, iii. 56.

† Buchanan's Account of the Mysore, p. 172. Tennant, i. 360 and ii. 184.

‡ Ibid. i. 360. § Ibid. i. 360, and Buchanan, p. 176. Heber, iii. 277.

tion of power is sold. The governors who purchase them, endeavour, as in the Turkish empire, to extort from the people subject to their authority as much as possible, during the period when they hold their office: and plunder the very persons whom it is their duty to protect. * To such a length is this grievous oppression carried, that few persons under the Mahratta dynasties have the possibility of acquiring any riches, except the powerful Bramins. Their avarice is insatiable, and yet they are seldom allowed to enjoy it, for the prince seizes the first opportunity to make them yield up all that they have acquired into his treasury.† It may, in short, safely be affirmed, that there is no government in the world less calculated to give security to the people than the Mahrattas; and it is to this cause that the accumulated misery, and repeated famines of the country are to be ascribed.‡ The anguish of suffering, joined to the restless spirit of the nobles, leads to continual revolutions; but this, in place of reforming abuses, only opens another source of misery greater than the former, for by the endless wars to which they give rise, the security of property is totally annihilated. The Ryot who cultivates the ground this year, is by no means sure of possessing it the next: and if he should be so fortunate, it will probably be with a large detachment of soldiers in his neighbourhood, to whom the property of friends and enemies falls an undistinguished prey.§

From these causes *hardly one acre in fifty is cultivated*, over the greater part of the Mahratta states, yet such is the fertility of the soil, that even this limited portion is sufficient to support a considerable popu-

* Tone's Account of the Mahrattas, p. 76. † Ibid. p. 84.
‡ Ibid. § Ibid.

lation. No man raises more than is adequate to his own support. The natural consequence is, that the first bad season produces a scarcity, and frequently whole districts, and three-fourths of the inhabitants of great cities, are carried off by this cause. Famine, indeed, is the great bane of this country; but as the soil is amazingly fertile, and the population in most places exceedingly small, it is easy to perceive, that it is the tyranny of government which is the ultimate cause of this calamity.*

Throughout the whole interior of India, in the Mahratta as well as in the adjoining states, all commerce is monopolized by the *Brinjarries*, who collect the rude produce of the soil from the natives: but this commerce receives no encouragement from government, which pays no attention to the formation of roads, or the protection of which in that country it so peculiarly stands in need.† In fact, it would not exist to anything like its present extent, were it not for the necessity of converting everything into specie, in order that it may be the more easily concealed from government. They derive little more from their manual labour, than *the habitation in which they dwell, and the food which is necessary to sustain them; their superfluity being always taken away.*‡

In the interior of India, in the south of the peninsula, the government resembles the feudal system, and has undergone no change since its commencement. The country in the valleys is rich and fertile, but the villages are poor and scanty. In many places the Rajahs have quitted the immemorial abode of their

* Tone, passim. † Tour in India, Asiat. Regist. Vol. i. 166.
‡ Ibid.

ancestors for the sake of security from the devastating inroads of the Mahrattas, and to remove into the higher parts of the Cochair, where they may more easily conceal themselves and their families.*

The great impediment, as is obvious from the preceding observations, to the improvement of India, has always been *the want of a permanent interest in their possessions to the cultivators.* The revenue of the state is, as in almost all the eastern countries, in fact, the rent of the land, and the landholder or zemindar is nothing but a collector under government, who receives ten *per cent.* of what he draws for his own behoof.† This being the case there is no *intermediate class* interposed between the sovereign and the cultivator: or at least no class capable of, or interested in, protecting the people. The whole weight of despotism, therefore, falls at once, with terrible and unbroken force, on the cultivator, and destroys the springs of wealth and population, by depriving him of all security for his possessions. The levying of rents is everywhere almost a scene of fraud and evasion on the one part, and of plunder and oppression on the other. Hence the management of the taxes, and the mode of collecting them, has a direct influence on the prosperity of agriculture; the tenant is brought at once into collision with a despotic government and rapacious army; he is perfectly defenceless, having seldom any valid lease, and no security for its observance if he had any; and he is in consequence inevitably plundered of any wealth which he may posess.‡

Small properties are common in India. They are

* Tour in India, Asist. Regist. i. 150.

† Tennant, ii. 20, and 184. ‡ Ibid.

split by the law of descent into small portions, and to these little possessions the proprietors are warmly attached. But their industry is not greater than that of the Ryots who have leases of their lands. They are everywhere unambitious and indolent: satisfied with the produce of their little domain, they will neither cultivate more land nor take to any other employment. If they let their lands to a tenant they are equally neglected, and the landlord, who is indigent in the extreme, does the utmost to extort money from his tenant.* There is no provision made here, any more than among other classes, for years of scarcity or unforeseen misfortune: the supply of the existing wants is the sole object of thought: for long experience, and the oppressions of centuries have taught the poor *never to attend to anything but the indulgence of the present moment.* A man who has only two days provision in the world is reckoned happy: he never thinks of to-morrow, satisfied if he can obtain in the day as it passes, sufficient subsistence for himself and his family.†

While such is the scene of confusion, pillage, and oppression which the native governments of India exhibit, and which have formed the habits, and accelerated the tendency to increase of her population, the inhabitants of the British dominions are unquestionably in many respects in a better situation; yet even here, great oppression of the lower orders exists; nor is it possible that this suffering can be removed till a radical change takes place in the *state of property* throughout the country. The fundamental evil in Hindostan is the insecurity of the cultivator against exorbitant exactions; and the perpetual settlement

* Tennant, ii. 342. Heber, iii. 122. † Tennant, i. 135.

and the Madras system have been alike unable to provide a remedy against this prevailing evil. The only security against it has hitherto proved the village system of the upper provinces, which may truly be termed the Magna Charta of the east: but much oppression exists even there, and the alarming defalcation in the territorial revenue of India of late years, proves that no adequate protection has yet been generally afforded to the cultivators; yet, notwithstanding all this, cultivation is in general greatly on the increase in the British provinces: vast numbers of ruined villages have been rebuilt; and the influx of strangers on all the frontiers of their territories, to gain the benefit of their protection, is very great.*

2. The second great cause of the redundant population of India is to be found in the influence of the established religion, and the habits which superstition has formed.

All classes in India, with the exception of a few among the Bramins, are involved in the *deepest ignorance.* The obscurity in which the people are involved is not the result of negligence: it is the effect of a deliberate and deep laid scheme, on which the priests everywhere act, to keep the great body of mankind in a state of mental darkness.† Their canonical books are regarded as a bequest too sacred to be committed to vulgar hands: to the greater part of the people, they are strictly forbidden, and doomed to remain in the most emphatic sense a dead letter.‡ Few individuals are taught to read and write; and those who are can derive no useful information from their knowledge: for science has never been addressed, or adapted to the wants of mankind, and the extravagant price of ma-

* Heber, i. 297, and iii. 274.

† Tytler on India, i. 147.

‡ Tennant, i. 119.

nuscripts confines the information which they contain to a limited number of the higher orders.*

Akin to this principle of the priesthood to keep the people in darkness for the sake of their own power, is the doctrine of passive obedience, which they inculcate as a duty of religion, and have succeeded in almost engrafting on the human mind in these unhappy regions. The Hindoo has no conception of any dignity, or importance, or respectability being attached to his situation. A consciousness of inferiority continually haunts him; and he obeys any superior authority with a promptitude which is so astonishing, as to appear rather the dictate of nature, than the result of habit.† It is to this cause that the frequent and easy conquest of Hindostan is to be imputed; and to its gradual influence is to be ascribed the humble, submissive character by which they are now distinguished. In every European state, the lower classes imitate the manners, dress, and style of living of their superiors, and the desire of rising in society, forms the most powerful restraint upon the principle of increase. In Hindostan this is never done: the attachment of a Hindoo to his station is equal to that to his religion itself.‡ The desire of rising in the world; the dread of falling in society; the pride of superior condition; the consciousness of political power, which are intended to be so many restraints on the principle of increase, are prevented from developing themselves, by the slavish submission which the priests have interwoven with the Hindoo character.

The superstition of the country encourages the disposition to early marriage. Sterility is esteemed a

* Tennant, i. 119.

† Tennant, i. 114. Sketches of Hindoos. Buchanan's Acc. of Mysore.

‡ Tennant, i. 92.

severe misfortune, or rather a curse of the offended Deity.* All ranks are extremely solicitous to have children to perform the funeral service over them, for they conceive that this mitigates their punishment in a future state.† Parents are enjoined by the precepts of religion to marry their children at their eleventh year; and if no children result from the first marriage, polygamy is allowed; and such is the anxiety for an offspring, that, if all these methods fail, it is usual to adopt a son.‡

3. It is not proposed to enter into a discussion in this sketch, of the various customs which have been prevalent in the Indian nations; but there is one so remarkable, and at the same time so important in its effects upon the principle of population, that it cannot be passed over in silence. The institution here alluded to is the institutions of *casts*. By this remarkable system, the whole body of the people is divided into four orders. None of these can ever quit his own cast, or enter into any other. The station of every individual is unalterably fixed: the walk of life is marked out from which he must not deviate. This line of separation is not only established by civil authority, but confirmed and sanctioned by religion: and each order or cast is said to have proceeded from the Deity in such a manner, that to mingle or confound them would be deemed an act of the most daring impiety.§

Nor is it between the four different tribes alone that such insuperable barriers are fixed. The members of each cast *adhere invariably to the profession of their forefathers.* From generation to generation,

* Heber, iii. 351. Sketches of Hindoos, 213. † Ibid.
‡ Ibid. Tennant, ii. 213. § Robertson's India. Appendix.

the same families have followed, and will always continue to follow, the same uniform course of life. The human mind bends to the law of necessity, and is accustomed to accommodate itself, not only to the restraints which the condition of its nature, or the institutions of its country impose, but to acquiesce in them. From his entrance into life, an Indian knows the station allotted to him, and the functions to which he is destined by his birth.*

This singular institution of *casts*, and their extraordinary continuance of families in the rank and profession which has descended to them from their ancestors, is of all institutions which human ingenuity could devise, the one best adapted to allow an unlimited scope to the principle of increase: because it crushes the growth of the strongest restraints which Nature has imposed on its operation. When every individual's rank in society, and his estimation in the world, are founded on his birth, without any regard to the consequences of his own imprudence; when his line of life in the world is marked out to him from his earliest years, and bounded by a line which he can never hope to pass; the strongest motives to a systematic view of life, and to the sacrifice of immediate enjoyment for the sake of future advancement, are done away. Man is left in the situation of the lower animals, without any check to the increase of his numbers, except those which the inability to procure subsistence imposes; because the habit of moral restraint is founded on the perception of an advantage to be derived from delaying the marriage union, and

* Robertson's India.—Appendix.

there is hardly any benefit to be derived from it where such institutions are prevalent.

When we regard the physical advantages of India, and the habits of its population: when we contemplate its vast plains, bearing every year double or triple crops of grain, with little aid from human labour, intersected by vast navigable rivers, and teeming with the warmth of a tropical sun: when we recollect that this country has been the abode of wealth, of industry, and of civilisation for thousands of years: and when we are informed that the habit of early marriages is universal, both from the ignorance of the people, the absence of artificial wants, and the influence of superstition, we cannot avoid being astonished that its population is so scanty, when compared with the means of subsistence which the country affords.

When we contemplate the moral and political evils to which the Indian population are subjected: when we behold them neglected by the sovereigns, debased by the priesthood, and plundered by the army: when we reflect on the insecure tenure by which the Ryot holds his property, the enormous abuses to which he is subjected, and the utter want of all capital to facilitate his undertakings: when we recollect that these unfortunate people are kept in the deepest ignorance of every useful art by the priesthood, and that the ravages of intestine war, or the extortions of mercenary troops have long spread through every corner of the realm; the subject of astonishment comes to be, how the population is so great as it actually is.

Between these two extremes, the population of Hindostan has long fluctuated. Beneath the vigorous and enlightened sway of the great monarchs who have oc-

casionally swayed the sceptre of the whole peninsula, the political evils of the country have been alleviated, and the riches of Nature have covered the earth with a numerous, and, comparatively speaking, happy population. Under the weak or distracted reigns of their successors, the lesser princes have recovered their independence, and the accumulated evils of war, pestilence, and famine, have thinned the numbers whom former prosperity had produced. In both circumstances the principle of increase has acted with the same unrestrained force; and extraneous causes only have determined whether the numbers of mankind were to increase or diminish under its operation. The population never has been limited by the *people themselves:* never influenced by the activity, the frugality, the artificial wants, or the desire of rising in the world, which characterize the inhabitants of a free country. And from the inefficacy of the greatest possible riches of Nature, even when occasionally aided by extraordinary wisdom and ability in individual sovereigns, to adapt the rate of increase to the circumstances of society, we may learn the salutary truth,—that the welfare of the people depends upon their own exertions,—and that on the bulwarks of public liberty which they establish, and the vigilance with which they are guarded, not only their present prosperity is founded, but the permanent developement of the laws destined for the regulation of population, and, consequently, the permanent welfare of the lower orders, must necessarily depend.

V.—China.

The empire of *China* affords an interesting spectacle to the political economist; and its vast and in-

digent population has frequently been appealed to, in support of the opinion, that a certain increase in the human species unavoidably terminates in redundant numbers and public misery. And truly, if the accounts given of the wisdom and probity of the Chinese government and its general system of administration had been correct, it would have been a melancholy prospect to have contemplated, in the degraded situation of mankind in this country, the unavoidable result of social progress, under the most favourable circumstances for public happiness. A closer examination, however, will here, as everywhere else, remove all the gloomy parts of the prospect, and by unfolding to our view, in the Chinese empire, the same oppression among the higher, and ignorance among the lower orders, which has in other countries deranged the provisions of Nature in regard to population, will teach us to rely with unshaken confidence upon those laws, by which, under the rule of justice and freedom, she has provided for the welfare of the species in the varying situations in which society is placed.

All travellers concur, though with some variation of expression, in extolling the vast population of the Chinese empire.* The whole population is stated by Sir George Staunton at 330,000,000; a population which yields 300 to the square mile.† Mr Barrow is inclined to consider this number as exaggerated; and he appeals in support of his opinion to various tracts of desert, or thinly peopled territory, through which he passed in traversing the country;‡ and Malte Brun has fixed the numbers at 175,000,000.§ It would rather appear

* Staunton's Embassy; Du Halde's China; Barrow's Travels in China.

† Staunton, ii. 354. ‡ Barrow, p. 94. § Malte Brun, iv. 232.

that the latter opinion is the correct one: but still, after making every allowance, there can be no doubt that the country is extremely populous, and that, in many places, this population presses upon the limits of human subsistence. The labouring classes are over the whole country in a state of the greatest indigence; their furniture is wretched; you will look in vain for the conveniences or implements which are common in an English cottage, among their miserable dwellings.* Notwithstanding the most economical arrangements, the labouring poor are almost everywhere reduced to vegetable food, with a very rare and scanty relish of any richer substance.† The usual rate of labour bears as small a proportion to the price of provisions as the common people will consent to suffer. Milk, butter, and cheese, are but little known; and it is very seldom that the peasantry eat animal food, though to each cottage is in general attached a few pigs and some poultry.‡ The dwellings and appearance of the people indicate, not less than their food, that they are for the most part reduced to great poverty.§ In the great towns, and in situations where the population is more crowded, the indigence of the lower people cannot be exceeded; and in no part of the world does it appear to have suggested so many different ways of earning a precarious subsistence.‖

Early marriages are universal in China, both among those in easy circumstances and among the poor.¶ Among the latter it is regarded as a measure of pru-

* Barrow, 194. † Staunton, ii. 55. ‡ Ibid. ii. 214–226.
§ Barrow, 70, 71, &c. ‖ Du Halde, passim.
¶ Staunton, ii. 56. Barrow.

dence, as the children are bound in indigence to maintain their parents; and by all it is considered *as a religious duty* wherever there is the least prospect of subsistence for a family. This prospect, however, is often not realized; and hence the number of children who are exposed, to avoid their suffering under a more lingering death. * To such a length is this barbarous custom carried, that from two to three thousand are annually exposed in the streets of Pekin alone, besides those privately drowned or thrown into the rivers. † This practice of infanticide appears to have existed from time immemorial in the empire;‡ but the dread of being reduced to this necessity has no effect in checking the prevailing tendency to early marriages, which are sanctioned, not only by established custom, but by the maxims of their religion. Celibacy is rare, even among soldiers; and the marriages of all ranks are not only earlier, but more prolific than in other countries. §

There seem to be hardly any limits to population in China, but those which the inability to procure subsistence may impose.‖ The boundaries of this subsistence are greatly more enlarged than in other countries. The whole surface of the empire is, with a few trifling exceptions, devoted to the production of food for man alone. There is no meadow, and very little pasture, nor are fields cultivated with beans, oats, turnips, or any sort of food for cattle.¶ Little land is taken up for roads, water-carriage being almost universally adopted. There are no commons, or lands suffered to lie waste, by the neglect, or the

* Staunton, ii. 57. † Barrow, 167, 168. ‡ Ibid.
§ Staunton, ii. 354. ‖ Ibid. ¶ Ibid.

luxury of great proprietors. The soil, under a warm fertilising sun, yields annually double crops. The labour of man is little diverted from productive to unproductive employments. Even the soldiers are for the most part employed in agriculture. Subsistence is everywhere used in the most economical way; and the vast quantity of vegetables raised in all parts of the empire contribute much to the maintenance of the population.* Entails, or perpetual destinations of land of any kind, are utterly unknown.†

Irrigation is reduced to a system, and over the greater part of the empire adopted; and the number of canals supply in general abundance of water.‡ Successive crops are in this way procured from the soil without the intervention of any fallow, or any other manure than water. In the southern provinces, two crops of rice and one of sugar are annually raised.§

In China *no horses are kept for pleasure, and very few for work:* ‖ the whole labour of the country of every description is conducted by human beings. The burdens are conveyed from canal to canal; the land is cultivated; the arts are supplied, all by *manual industry.*¶ They have *few machines*, and what they have are of the most rude and simple kind.** In agriculture, the spade and the hoe universally supersede the use of draught cattle. The country may be considered as one great garden, almost entirely cultivated in the horticultural style of husbandry.†† Drill crops are generally used, in which the old and the children find employment; and in this respect, the situation of the

* Staunton, ii. 354. † Ibid. ii. 355. ‡ Ibid. ii. 304.
§ Ibid. ii. 241. ‖ Barrow, 574, 575. ¶ Ibid. and Staunton.
** Barrow, 311. †† Ibid. 564.

country resembles Hesse, Darmstadt, or Flanders.* Farms are universally small;† and the division of manual labour is carried to its utmost length, without ever having led to any agricultural machinery for the diminution of the workmen employed. Each cottage has a small garden attached to it,‡ and these frequently belong in property to the peasantry who inhabit them.§

A singular law exists in China, to which it is difficult to find a counterpart in any European state, though it had a well-known parallel in the Jewish institutions, viz. that all lands which are not regularly cultivated are forfeited to the King, who grants them to new and more industrious tenants.‖ Notwithstanding this, however, there are large tracts of swampy and desert lands to be seen in the country, approaching near to the capital, and crossing the empire in every direction. Some of these vast morasses, many hundred miles in length, fell under the observation of Mr Barrow; and others of still greater extent are mentioned by the missionaries, as existing in the eastern parts of the empire.¶ From the great extent of these waste lands, it is obvious that, though the population of this country is under existing circumstances redundant in the extreme, it is yet greatly within the capabilities which Nature has afforded to its territory.**

It is remarkable, that, though there *are no poor laws in China, few beggars are to be found.*†† The people in the country, though utterly destitute of all conveniences, do not appear to be in general in want of the absolute necessaries of life;‡‡ but population is

* Staunton, ii. 225. † Barrow, 571; Staunton, ii. 219.
‡ Staunton, ii. 226. § Ibid. ii. 219. ‖ Ibid. ii. 282.
¶ Barrow, c. 9, p. 171. ** Ibid. 580. †† Ibid. ‡‡ Staunton, ii. 214.

generally too crowded to admit such a portion of ground to each family as would supply all its comforts. *

The attention of the Chinese government has always been strongly directed to the supplies of the people with food; but their measures, however wise or benevolent, have not been found equal in their effect to those watchful and enterprising men in Europe, who speculate in grain. Famine rages more frequently, and with greater violence in a Chinese province than in an European kingdom :† indeed, it recurs in general at the expiration of every three or four years.‡ The effects of such dearths among a people already populous to the utmost limits of the existing means of subsistence, may be more easily conceived than described.

From what has now been said, it is not difficult to perceive that causes exist in China sufficient to produce a *numerous* population; and that the state of society there is such as to require a much greater number of the people than would be requisite in any European state. But it is of more importance to show the causes which have contributed to the formation of *redundant* numbers; for it is not enough to point out the circumstances which have produced a great demand for labour, when a population yet greater than that demand requires, is continually produced.

The government of China is a pure despotism; and the people have not the most distant idea of liberty or independence.§ Strict subordination, unqualified obedience to existing authority, are the great

* Staunton, ii, 214.
† Ibid. ii. 313.
‡ Barrow, 384.
§ Staunton, ii. 169.

maxims of government, and which they have succeeded in impressing upon the people.* The supreme power is lodged in the hands of the monarch, who rules by mercenary agents, appointed at his pleasure, and who owe their rank solely to the continuance of his good will.† *There is no gradation of rank in the empire;* the whole population is composed of governors and slaves. ‡ No such thing is known as *hereditary* dignity; the only distinction arises from the present possession of power.§ When a mandarin obtains a government, he endeavours, by every means in his power, to extort money from those who are subject to his dominion; and the maxim of the necessity of maintaining subordination generally preserves him from the punishment due to his crimes.‖ If a man, by agriculture or trade, has acquired riches, he can enjoy them only in private; he durst not, by having a finer house, or richer clothes, let his neighbour know that he is wealther than himself, lest he should betray him to the commanding officer of the district, who would find no difficulty in bringing him within the pale of the sumptuary laws, and laying his property under confiscation.¶ Enormous and multiplied evils at length produce tumults, springing from the despair of long-continued suffering; and these attract attention, which lead to the dismissal of the magistrate. But, except in such extreme cases, oppression on the part of the mandarins in general remains unredressed.** The case is very different, however, with any failure towards the sovereign; they are treated with inexorable rigour

* Staunton, ii. 169. † Barrow, 388. ‡ Ibid. 389.
§ Staunton, ii. 52, 53. ‖ Ibid. ii. 169. ¶ Barrow, 389.
** Staunton, ii. 169.

in the least failure towards government. They are aware of this; they feel the chagrin arising from insecurity; and this is one great cause of the oppression in which they participate. *

The rich are the class most exposed to the rapacity of these ministers of government; the poor, from their insignificance, generally escape the tempest which falls on the heads of their superiors.† So universal is this practice of plundering the wealthy, that it is a common remark among the Chinese, that fortunes, either in consequence of being parcelled out among heirs, or lost in speculations, or extravagance, or extorted by oppressive mandarins, seldom continue considerable in individuals of the same family beyond the third generation.‡

Justice is venal over the whole empire; presents and offerings are universal from an inferior to a superior, and from all litigants to a judge.§ Money is the grand instrument of decision in the Chinese courts; and the judgment is generally in favour of the heaviest purse.‖ Under such a system it may be conceived what security the poorer classes have for the preservation of their properties. The humble and obscure individuals who compose the body of the nation, and have no means of giving vent to their complaints on the conduct of particular rulers, are generally left at their mercy.¶

The sumptuary laws, which regulate the houses as well as the dress of the opulent, are the source of incredible oppression in China.** It is their maxim, the richer the houses of the great, the meaner the cabins

* Staunton, ii. 169. † Ibid. ii. 52, 53. ‡ Ibid. and Barrow
§ Staunton, ii. 316; Barrow, 370. ‖ Ibid.
¶ Staunton, ii. 307. ** Ibid. ii. 220.

of the poor. * This maxim seems at first sight to favour the working classes: but it prevents the free expenditure of wealth, and in practice the sumptuary laws are made the source of infinite vexation to all *who have raised themselves into a higher situation than that in which they were originally born.*†

The great body of the people have neither any powers nor any interest in the preservation of government. Though degraded in the greatest degree, they would yet willingly revolt, if *terror*, the grand instrument of Chinese government, did not restrain them.‡ Without spirit, and without hope, they submit to all the degradations and oppressions to which they are subjected, until some extraneous event, or the pangs of hunger, rouse them into a transitory tumult.

Notwithstanding a regular army, which is computed at two millions, and in spite of the police which has been so much boasted of, this empire is a prey to the most violent outrages. There is in general scarcely any cultivation but in the neighbourhood of villages: no one will live on a detached farm for fear of being plundered by robbers, who prowl about the country in such formidable bands, as sometimes to threaten the most considerable cities. § A similar appearance may be observed in Hindostan, in Poland, France, Spain, and other countries: and universally it is the mark of an inefficient government, and an oppressed people. It is curious to observe in the remotest parts of the globe the same causes producing similar effects.

To those who have been habituated to the treat-

* Staunton, ii. 220.
† Barrow, 389, 390.
‡ Staunton, ii. 169.
§ Barrow, 574.

ment of the lower orders in England, or in most of the European monarchies, there is something inexpressibly revolting in the usage of the same description of men in the Chinese empire. Every mandarin is himself liable to corporal punishment, and he inflicts it without mercy on all his inferiors.* One of the barges in which Mr Barrow sailed having run aground, and the sailors having failed in getting it off, the superintending officer ordered his soldiers *to flog the captain and the whole crew:* and this was immediately put in practice.† Van Braam assures us that, in the Dutch embassy, eight porters expired under the loads with which they were so cruelly burdened. On another occasion several persons had taken posts on an old vessel to see the embassy pass, and as it broke down they were all precipitated into the water. Although numbers of boats were sailing about, none were seen to go to the assistance of those who were struggling in the water: nor could any entreaties on the part of the English gentlemen prevail on the Chinese to give them any assistance.‡ Innumerable other facts of a similar import might be mentioned, which have been noticed by all travellers, with expressions of the deepest commiseration for the degraded condition of mankind in so large a portion of the globe. These facts are more valuable even than laws themselves, in illustrating the state of the poor, as it is actually determined by the practice and habits of the country. Like the conduct of the rich to the poor in Ireland,§ of which Mr Young speaks in terms of such reprobation, and which may still be

* Barrow, passim.
† Ibid. 161.
‡ Ibid. 166-7.
§ Young's Ireland, i. 74, 84.

observed,* they not only indicate something defective in the existing relation between the higher orders and the lower; but also point to that immemorial abuse of power by the former from which these habits have sprung.

Land in China is very much subdivided: and the existing law, which distributes all estates, whether in land or money, equally among the sons, contributes to render the subdivision every day greater.† The universal practice of marrying at an early age, arising from the superstitious dread of dying without issue,‡ renders the families more numerous than they are in most European states; and from the operation of this cause, and the no less powerful influence of the extortions of the mandarins, there is a constant tendency in China to equalize wealth, and break down landed estates among a great number of proprietors.§ Entails of every kind are utterly unknown: everything favours the diminution but nothing conduces towards the accumulation of property. Thus is the land of the country distributed in the way and under the circumstances which of all others are most favourable to the increase in the numbers of mankind; being divided among an infinite number of proprietors, who derive from it the means of subsistence, without having either the powers to acquire, or the wish to enjoy, any of the artificial wants or conveniences of life.

The number of manufacturers and artisans bears but a small proportion to that of the agriculturists: a sure proof of the limited supplies for exchange which the latter possess.‖ Every part of the country is fill-

* Personal observation. † Staunton, ii. 52. ‡ Ibid.
§ Staunton, ii. 53. ‖ Ibid. ii. 354.

ed with labourers, whose sole employment is the cultivation of the soil, to be consumed by themselves.* The revenue is collected in kind by boats, which bring it from all parts of the empire to the granaries at Pekin, where it is sold to the people.†

The Chinese, as all the world knows, have a superstitious aversion to the sea, and foreign enterprise of every kind. A native of the empire seldom leaves it: *emigration is extremely rare;* and foreign navigation, being principally in the hands of strangers, employs comparatively few of the natives of the country.‡

From this slight and imperfect sketch of the situation of the people in the Chinese empire, it appears that a variety of causes have conspired to produce the vast population which it at present exhibits; some having a tendency to enlarge the means of subsistence and increase the demand for labour: others to remove all the limitations which Nature has provided in the progress of society to the principle of increase. It is to the singular, and, perhaps, fortuitous combination of these causes, that this immense population is to be ascribed; and, in contemplating the extraordinary spectacle which they have produced, we discern more forcibly than any eloquence could show, the vital importance to human happiness, of those limitations to population which spring from the comfort, and strengthen with the measured liberty of the people. Before taking leave of this nation, it may be of some consequence to sum up, in a few words, the causes to which the utter absence of all moral restraint, and the remarkable facility of increase are to be ascribed.

The causes which have contributed to produce the

* Staunton, ii. 354. † Barrow, 172. ‡ Staunton, ii. 354.

vast demand for labour, and to afford subsistence to the great number of the people, are chiefly as follows :—

1. The remarkable fertility of the soil, yielding in the southern provinces two or three crops in a year. This fertility will not of itself explain the population; since in equally rich soils the number of the people are often scanty: but it is clear, that, without its influence, all the other causes must have had a very circumscribed influence.

2. China has been long freed from any wars: its wealth and its industry have been confined to the encouragement of domestic labour, and not diverted to the unproductive employments of warlike life. Even its soldiers are agriculturists, and preserve in the midst of arms the pacific industry to which they were first habituated. On some occasions, indeed, especially in the invasion by Timour, the ravages of hostile bands have spread with almost unequalled destruction through its plains :* but the riches of the soil and the mildness of the climate soon restored the numbers whom this transitory tempest had destroyed. Separated from the rest of the world by impassable deserts or the Pacific Ocean, they have been strangers to that permanent draft on the population which results from the frequent and organized warfare of modern Europe, and from that permanent direction of a large portion of national capital into unproductive channels, which has arisen from the profuse expenditure of its governments. The taxes of China, which exceeds Europe in extent and population, do not exceed L. 66,000,000 Sterling annually :† a sum considerably less than was,

* Gibbon, Vol. xi. p. 68, 74. † Barrow, c. vii.

during the late war, exacted from one member of the European commonwealth. No national debt has absorbed the superfluous capital of the country; but all the wealth which its land and its labour produced has been suffered to accumulate for the encouragement of domestic and productive industry.

3. This capital was continued in the employment of domestic activity under circumstances which, in almost all other countries, would have led to foreign trade. The increase of wealth, in all states of ordinary dimensions, induces foreign commerce, by the desire for the productions of other climates which naturally springs up among the people. But the immense extent and varied productions of China, stretching from the Arctic to the tropical regions, and embracing within itself almost all the productions of the globe, rendered foreign trade almost superfluous. Joined to this is the superstitious aversion of the people to foreign trade, and the policy of the Government, which throws such obstacles in the way of all such as wish to pursue it, as are sufficient, among that ignorant and superstitious people, to stop completely the overflow of wealth into distant or external channels of employment. Thus, both from the extent of the country, the superstition of the people, and the policy of the Government, is the wealth of the state chained to the encouragement of domestic industry; and all the increase of population which naturally arises from such a concentration of the causes which create it, is compelled to take place within the country itself. It will be recollected what a powerful agent the natural progress of capital towards foreign states has been shown to be in diminishing, in the advanced periods of society, the home de-

mand for labour: and some estimate may, in consequence, be formed of the influence of those causes, whether physical or moral, upon the progress of population, which completely prevent the operation of this limiting principle, and compel capital to hold out that exclusive encouragement to domestic industry, in the later periods of society, which are intended by Nature to operate only in the earlier.

4. Throughout the whole of China an internal communication of the most extensive kind has long existed: the great canals by which it is intersected have opened to the remote parts of the country the extensive market which was afforded by the richer and by the great cities: the prosperity of every one branch of the community has been permitted to act and react on every other. Those obstructions in the way of mutual intercourse which have arisen in modern Europe, from the subdivision of kingdoms, or the hostilities in which they have been engaged, or in consequence of the pernicious restraints upon commerce within the same kingdom, have always been unknown in China. It is difficult to estimate the degree of wealth or population to which Europe would have arrived, if her separate states had for any considerable period enjoyed an internal intercourse of the same free and unbroken description.

5. The division of labour and the improvement of machinery have never been carried any considerable length in China. To this day, they are ignorant of the useful invention of a lock in canals: their mechanics and artificers are destitute of all the modes by which human exertion is abridged in other states.*

* Staunton and Barrow, passim.

Those prodigious abbreviations of labour which the competition of other states have forced upon the English and Flemish artists, are utterly unknown in the celestial empire, where the principles of natural philosophy are not understood, and the only choice is among persons equally uninformed. Competition in consequence has taken the direction of diminishing the wages of labour, but not superseding that labour itself; and the small number of the artificers, when compared with those of the agricultural labourers, renders this diminution of little practical importance in restraining the progress of population.

6. The use of draught horses, or beasts of burden of any description, in this vast empire, is extremely limited. Human labour is employed in every branch of agriculture, and in every department of trade. It is difficult to estimate the effect of this practice upon the population. By giving employment to such multitudes in the fields, not only of able-bodied men, but of women and children, it augments to an incredible degree the means of subsistence. It is to this cause, unquestionably, that the great population of Flanders is to be ascribed: and it is to the same cause that we are to impute the vast numbers which everywhere appears in the wine countries of Europe. When it is recollected that this demand for manual labour exists over the whole of China, in consequence of the universal adoption of the garden style of husbandry, this single cause appears almost sufficient to explain the great population of this empire.

7. The means of subsistence have been greatly increased by the *universal poverty* of the people, occasioned by the despotic nature of the Government, already described, which has not only compelled the lower

orders to forego all the conveniences of life, but has habituated them to live on the smallest quantity and lowest species of food which is adequate to the support of existence. By depriving the poor of all power of purchasing luxuries or comforts, the number of artisans, manufacturers, and of all those who subsist by the labour of others, has thus been reduced to the smallest possible number; and the great majority of the people have been turned to a productive employment, and the raising of agricultural produce. By compelling the working-classes to subsist on the coarsest species and smallest quantity of food, it has completely prevented the attention of the cultivator from being directed to the production of costly or luxurious kinds of subsistence, as milk, butter, meat, &c. and confined him entirely to the raising of those articles of necessity, which are suitable to the situation of the persons by whom it was to be consumed. In this country, such a state of things, by utterly destroying the source of manure and the rotation of crops, would diminish in place of enlarging the means of augmenting the produce which the soil afforded; but the case is very different in China, where the warmth of the climate, the use of irrigation, and the industrious use of human manure, is sufficient for the enriching of the soil, and where, consequently, the poverty of the people, without diminishing the power of agriculture, enlarges the numbers of those who can be maintained from the fruits of the earth. If any person will consider the extent of land in England which is devoted to the pasturing of cattle and horses, or the production of barley for distilleries and breweries, embracing, as already shown, more than the whole surface devoted to the raising of human subsistence; he will be able to form some conception of the capacity

for maintaining a numerous and indigent population, which China possesses, in consequence of her land being in general confined to the necessary articles of human livelihood.

These causes will explain the vast population which exists in China, and the capacities for maintaining this population which the country possesses. But they will not explain the existence of a *redundant* population, such as there unquestionably exists in that country. They will shew us why the numbers of the people should be great; but not why they should be greater than the existing circumstances will comfortably maintain. We shall find the explanation of this fact in the ignorance, the degradation, and the insecurity of the people.

1. The government of the country is, as already observed, a *pure despotism:* the Sovereign has the unlimited command of appointing whom he pleases for the government of the provinces. These persons abuse the trust which is reposed in them; they rigidly exact obedience to the sumptuary laws, and make them a pretence for pillaging his subjects. The enjoyment of wealth is prevented; the display of it attracts danger; and the industrious man has no motive to postpone the marriage union on account of the elevated rank into which economy would raise him, or the extended enjoyments which early restraint would enable him to command.

2. There is no gradation of rank; no sense of individual importance; no consciousness of political power in China. The degrading punishment of flogging is applied to all ranks indiscriminately; the government, depending on its own strength, never bestows a thought upon the feelings or wishes of the people.

The lower orders, sunk beneath the tyranny of many thousand years, have utterly lost the spirit or the desires of free citizens; and all the limitations which these feelings are fitted to impose to the principle of increase are, in consequence, prevented from developing themselves.

3. The Chinese have a superstitious dread of dying without issue: early marriages are considered not merely as a means of enjoyment or of convenience, but as a religious duty. This universal feeling conspires, with the other circumstances which we have mentioned, to render early marriage the first object in life to every rank in society.

4. The established permission of infanticide, which has probably resulted from the redundance of the population, and the details of which involve a degree of national cruelty to which there is no parallel in any other part of the world, removes the only remaining check which could arrest the progress of population. Nor are the effects of this confined to those instances in which actual relief is given to a family by the exposure of an infant; the prospect of the easy method of getting rid of such a burden, encourages marriage in innumerable instances in which the thing itself is never practised. Young persons marry in the belief that they may get rid of their children if they cannot maintain them; and when the infants are produced, humanity prompts them to save their offspring, and they struggle on through life, with a burden, which was originally incurred, in some degree, from the influence of this barbarous law.

When so many causes conspire, some to augment the demand for labour, some to remove the barriers which Nature has imposed to the principle of increase,

it is not surprising that this vast country exhibits a numerous and miserable population; numerous, because so many circumstances have contributed to augment the demand for labour, and the means of subsistence; miserable, because so much has been done by the government, the superstitions, and the manners of the country, to degrade and brutify the people. China, in short, exhibits the example of a government; good enough to afford the means of subsistence to the poor, but oppressive enough to deprive them of every other desire or enjoyment; in which, by the debased state of the human mind, the principle of increase is allowed to operate with unlimited force, but where the tyranny of the higher orders has not risen to such a height as to take away from the poor the means of rearing their families.

One other circumstance particularly deserves notice. *The throne in China is supported by maxims propagated from the press.** The art of printing, practised from the earliest times, has been the main cause of the stability of its institutions. It has been the means of diffusing universally, and establishing among all ranks of men, many fixed principles, which serve as so many dikes against the tumult of human passions. It is from this cause that its institutions and the national opinions have survived the wreck of dynasties. The sovereign may be removed, or his family destroyed, but the manners and laws of the people remain unchanged.† "It is remarkable," says Turgot, "that while England is the country in the world, in which information is most universally diffused, it is the country at the same time in which institutions are the most venerated,

* Staunton, ii. 171. † Ibid.

and in which any changes can be brought about with the greatest difficulty." * At the two extremities of the globe, we perceive the two kingdoms of England and China, differing in their laws, their manners, their origin, and their religion, uniting to demonstrate the efficacy which the diffusion of information, when properly regulated, has in strengthening the bands by which the social system is held together. And this consideration tends to enlarge our views as to the real operation of the press upon mankind, and to point out how widely mistaken are both those, who apprehend, from unlimited freedom in the dissemination of thought, permanent discord and confusion to society; and those who look upon the diffusion of information, as an effectual safeguard against the encroachments of arbitrary power in all ages of the world. The despotism of China, let it never be forgotten, in Asia, equally with that of Napoleon in Europe, was supported by maxims propagated by the press;—a clear proof that, like general instruction or military prowess, that mighty instrument is to be regarded as a means of power, not a security against iniquity; and that, according to the use which is made of it, and the spirit of the people among whom it is established, it may become either a blessing or a curse;—an instrument for the extension of freedom, or a forge for the manufacture of the chains of absolute power.

VI.—JAPAN.

The situation of the people in JAPAN, if we may credit the accounts of travellers, is in some respects similar, and in others extremely dissimilar, to their condition under the Chinese government. Though the

* Œuvres de Turgot, Vol. vi. p. 232.

soil is naturally barren* over the greater part of the country, yet the inhabitants are very numerous.† The appearances of a vast number of mankind are everywhere exhibited, not only in the towns, but in the remotest parts of the kingdom.‡ Yet with this vast population *there is hardly a beggar or a needy person to be seen.*§ Frugality is the ruling principle of the Japanese; and this principle pervades all ranks, from the sovereign down to the peasant. The middling classes are content with their little pittance, and the accumulated stores of the rich are not squandered in wantonness and luxury.‖

It is by this force of unceasing industry that the country is made to maintain its innumerable inhabitants.¶ The method of husbandry, universally adopted, is the garden style; the soil is all turned up by the spade, and incredible pains are taken in weeding the crops.** Cultivation almost everywhere creeps in terraces up the hill-sides, and in some places, lofty mountains are cultivated in this manner to their very summit.†† So great is the supply of food obtained in this manner, that though the country is so exceedingly populous, famines are seldom heard of.‡‡

But though the necessaries of life are abundant in Japan, and divided in decent competence among its numerous inhabitants, yet the poorer classes enjoy but a limited share of its comforts and conveniences. The people everywhere live frugally, equally removed from absolute want on the one hand, and

* Thunberg, iii. 233.
† Ibid. iv. 80.
‡ Russian Embassy, v. p. 171.
§ Thunberg, iii. 259.
‖ Thunberg, iii. 259.
¶ Ibid. iv. 80.
** Russian Embassy. Thunberg, iv. 83.
†† Ibid. iv. 80.
‡‡ Thunberg, iv. 94.

comfort or opulence on the other. Of animal food, milk, butter, or cheese, the labouring classes never partake, though the climate is so cold as to render these articles essential to the well-being of the people.* Oxen and cows are rarely to be met with, and they are used only for drawing carts, or ploughing fields which are constantly under water. They never eat their flesh, nor make use of their milk. A few swine are occasionally to be seen, but sheep or goats are unknown.† The people live entirely on grain and vegetables, with the exception of those districts of the sea shore where fish are to be obtained, which are sought for with the greatest avidity. ‡ Meadows or grass fields are extremely rare, as indeed is every production which ministers to the comfort or conveniences of life; but of its necessaries there appears to be no deficiency.§

The clothing, furniture, and dwellings of the people are as simple as their diet. Even in the abodes of the rich few costly articles of furniture are to be met with, and in the cottages of the poor they are almost unknown.‖ Their floor-mats serve them both for beds and chairs; and the other articles of furniture are only such as are indispensable for holding their goods and cooking their victuals.¶ In a word, frugality is the principle which actuates all classes in Japan.**

In Japan the government, laws, and manners have existed without change for centuries. Innumerable inhabitants are to be seen, without any striking irre-

* Thunberg, iv. 95. † Ibid.
‡ Russian Embassy. Thunberg, iv. 99.
§ Ibid. Introduction to Vol. iv. 7. ‖ Ibid. iv. 63.
¶ Ibid. ii. 284. ** Ibid. iii. 259.

gularity of fortune, without discontent, distress, or emigration. * Agriculture is in a highly prosperous state. No waste lands are to be met with; and the necessaries of life abound even to superfluity. But of luxuries they have no conception. There is no consumption of wine, or chocolate, coffee, brandy, or punch,—no bankers, or corporations, or monopolies,—no taverns or alehouses,—no equipages, carriages, or cavalry,—no theatres or playhouses. † With the exception of the Emperor, no person has the means of getting rich in Japan but the merchant; and this class of men frequently accumulate considerable wealth; but the profession is, nevertheless, universally despised.‡

Land is extremely subdivided; in fact, it belongs to the actual cultivators, whose domain in general does not extend beyond a few acres.§ Properly speaking, indeed, the sovereign, as in other eastern dynasties, is the proprietor of the whole land of the kingdom; and the taxes levied upon the soil, which are extremely heavy, constitute at once the rent of the land, and the revenue of the state. This impost, though extremely heavy, *is, nevertheless, levied with regularity,* and is not made the scene of military oppression,‖ as in the other countries of the east; nor is the peasant harassed by a variety of tyrants, as in many of the European kingdoms.¶ He has only one master, the sovereign of the country, and when the land rent is paid to him *he has no longer any oppression to fear.* But these lands are held under the condition of being perpetually cultivated. If the exist-

* Russian Embassy. Thunberg, iv. 7.
† Ibid. Introduction to Vol. iv. p. 7. ‡ Ibid. iv. 106.
Ibid. iv. 68. ‖ Thunberg, iv. 80. ¶ Ibid.

ing tenant cannot manage a certain portion of his fields he forfeits them, and any one who can is at liberty to cultivate them.* The tillers of the ground, being the persons who immediately contribute to the wealth of the sovereign, are considered as the peculiar object of the protection of government: hence every spot of ground is made to produce something, and the country is capable of maintaining its innumerable inhabitants.†

The *inland trade* is in a very flourishing state, being in every respect free and uncontrolled, and there being no want of communication between the different parts of the empire.‡ *No Japanese is allowed to leave his own country,* or to visit any foreign ones, *under pain of death.*§ Liberty in a certain sense is the soul of the Japanese, but it is a liberty very different in its nature and in its effects from that which prevails in Europe. It is a liberty which consists *in the despotic authority of law, and the regularity with which it is administered;* but this is the result, not of freedom on the part of the people, but of wisdom and unfettered power on the part of the government. The laws are extremely severe, but they protect equally the rich and the poor.‖ Both the government and the supreme civil magistrates make the preservation of order, the protection of the persons and property of the citizens, an object of the greatest solicitude.¶ But while this is the case, on the one hand, the rigour of power is kept up with the most scrupulous attention on the other; subordination to government and to their superiors is inculcated at the earli-

* Thunberg, iv. 80, 68, &c.
† Thunberg, iv. 80, and 11. Russian Embassy, ii. p. 79.
‡ Thunberg, iv. 106. § Ibid. iv. 63. ‖ Ibid. vii. 253.
¶ Ibid. iv. 11.

est period on children, and the most slavish submission being always manifested by the poor in their manners towards their superiors.* If the rights of the people are respected, it is not because there is a vestige of popular spirit or public independence in Japan: but because long experience has taught the sovereigns, that it is by protecting their industry that the largest revenue and the greatest power can be secured to themselves.

Such is the account of the situation of the population of Japan, which is given by the few Europeans who have visited that singular country: and it is an account of which in some respects we might be disposed to doubt the reality, were there not examples in other parts of the world, of an extraordinary effect being produced on the fabric of society by the influence of religion and habit on the human mind. And if this account be in all respects correct, it would appear, that Japan exhibits the example of an eastern dynasty under its most favourable aspect, for the production and prosperity of the people; where the ravages of inferior dynasties, and the extortions of subordinate officers are checked by the awful authority of the sovereign; where the welfare of the people is encouraged as the basis of power in the throne, and the whole payments of the cultivator are centered in one great land-rent to government; but where every principle of freedom, and every attempt at individual elevation is crushed by the despotic principles which are universally inculcated. The population, secure from the influence of these causes, joined to the undisturbed tranquillity which they have enjoyed in conse-

* Thunberg, iii. 254.

quence of their insular situation, the free internal communication which the wisdom of government has provided, and the absolute impossibility of withdrawing either capital or labour into foreign employments, to have reached nearly to the borders assigned by the extent of the soil to the farther increase of the human species. The frugality and foresight which seem to characterize all classes, is the restraint, and the only restraint, which represses the principle of increase within the bounds which the welfare of society requires; but from the condition of the people it would appear, that it does not press upon them with any unusual or destructive force. And from the situation of the people in this highly populous country, in which the means of subsistence are confined,—where many of the limitations upon the principle of increase which are provided in the human mind have not been developed, and where emigration or foreign employment cannot be obtained,—we may judge of the power which the single restriction which has been developed possesses, of controlling the operation of the principle of increase, and learn from this example, what must be the combined strength of all those restraints which grow under happier circumstances with the wealth, and strengthen with the liberty of mankind.

VIII.—Persia and Affghanistaun.

A detailed account of the condition of the people in Modern Persia, as described in the numerous works of able and intelligent travellers who have lately visited that interesting country, would be merely a repetition of the accounts already given, possibly at too great length, of the oppression to which the people

are subject in the different parts of the Turkish empire and Indian peninsula. It is the remarkable peculiarity of the dynasties in the east, that their system of government is uniformly the same, and has continued to be invariably founded on similar maxims, from the earliest ages. To whatever cause it may be owing, nothing is more certain than that the government and institutions of the oriental states are precisely the same at this time as they were at the earliest period of which history makes mention. The descriptions of Porter, of Buckingham, of Morier, and of Fraser, differ in no respect from the picture which may be gathered from the graphic sketches of Herodotus; and the most faithful portrait that ever has been given of the present manners of Bagdad and Ispahan, is that which for a thousand years has given delight to every successive generation, in the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Supreme uncontrolled power is vested in the sovereign, and the throne, though generally preserved in the same family, descends according to no settled law or custom. The intrigues of the Harem, or the superiority of courage or address on the part of one prince of the family, thus become the real causes of elevation to the throne; and the demise of the sovereign is generally followed by as many intestine convulsions and desolating contests for power, as arose in Poland from the elective constitution of the monarchy. Absolute power once gained by the fortunate competitor for the throne, is immediately communicated to the inferior Pachas and governors, and by them delegated in their turns to the Cadis or Imans, by whom their authority is exercised. All these functionaries, holding their office during pleasure, are li-

able at any moment to deprivation or confiscation at the hands of their superior officer or the sovereign; and it is the interest of all, therefore, to make the most of their short-lived and precarious tenure of office, by the most arbitrary exactions from those who are subjected to their power. Hereditary rank or dignity is unknown; office and power are everywhere held at pleasure; and such are the mutations of fortune or the oppressions of Government, that wealth seldom descends in a family beyond the third generation. Against these multiplied evils the only practical security which the people enjoy is to be found in the inaccessible strength of their mountain retreats, which often places them beyond the reach of plunder,—the universal establishment of the village system, which, where the Pachas are not very powerful, generally leads to the observance of the fixed tribute from the little community by the tax-gatherers,—and the aggregate strength of the incorporated trades in towns, which often enables them to compound for the exactions of those in authority, or even intimidate the possessors of power from attempting acts of flagrant oppression.*

The formidable power to which Nadir Shah arose only a century ago, and the immense horde of cavalry with which he devastated and laid waste the north of India, demonstrates that Persia still possesses the elements of national strength, and that its territory, intersected as it is in all directions by desert tracts, inhabited by Nomade tribes, is still capable of sending forth, when the standard of any powerful and victorious chief has collected them together, those innumerable swarms of horse who have so often changed the

* Morier; Fraser, Porter, and Buckingham's Travels in Persia, *passim.*

dynasties of the plains of the east. But, notwithstanding this, the general condition of the country at present affords a remarkable contrast to its ancient greatness; and in no part of Asia, probably, has the destructive effect of insecurity of property appeared in so remarkable a manner in destroying the numbers of mankind. The plain of Mesopotamia alone, which is five times the size of the Delta in Egypt, is computed to have contained in ancient times, forty millions of inhabitants; and the total population of the empire when it was conquered by Alexander the Great, was certainly not less than sixty millions. At present the whole monarchy does not contain above six or eight millions of souls, and the cultivated are to the uncultivated acres as one to ten.* Xerxes invaded Greece with at least a million of armed men; and six hundred thousand soldiers contended with Alexander on the plain of Arbela for the empire of the world;—but in the late war with Russia, the Shah of Persia was never able to produce fifteen thousand men in the field, and the whole military force which he can at present command is little more than twenty thousand, most of whom are so ill armed, that they hardly deserve the name of soldiers. The history of mankind scarcely affords an example of such a decline from ancient wealth and greatness; and the dreadful periodical ravages of the Tartars will not explain the phenomena; for they have occurred at nearly equal distant periods in all ages, from the earliest history of the world; and the most powerful race of monarchs who ever sat on the Persian throne, and who so long contended on equal terms with the majesty of Rome, the successors of Cyrus, the Parthian kings, the race

* Chardin's Travels: Harris's Coll. p. 902: and Malte Brun, ii. 231.

of the monarchs of Sassanides, have all sprung from such northern conquerors, who infused for some ages into their successors the energy and valour which they brought with them from their deserts.

Artificial wants are unknown among the labouring classes in Persia; the fare of the poor is the simplest imaginable; the use of animal food or luxuries of any kind is unknown. Though strongly attached to them, they are in general abstemious in the use of intoxicating liquors; and their only luxury consists in the multitude of horses, which appears generally in the east to be such a necessary of life that the very poorest classes among the Nomade part of the population cannot exist without them.* The existing restraints, therefore, upon the increase of mankind, in a country capable, as former experience demonstrates, of maintaining such a prodigious population, must be sought for in the insecurity of property and the general difficulty of earning a subsistence. And the effect of these causes in checking the growth of the human species has been more powerful in Persia than elsewhere in the east, from the following circumstance, which is of paramount importance, and has not hitherto met with the attention which it deserves.

Although the climate in the hilly parts of Persia is in winter extremely cold, and even more rigorous than in some European latitudes, yet the summer is long, and the drought during its continuance excessive. Irrigation, therefore, is an indispensable preliminary to cultivation in almost every part of the country. Wherever water can be brought, a plentiful return is sure to reward the labours of the hus-

* Eton's Turkish Empire, 275. Volney, ii. 377. Buckingham's Persia, ii. 236.

bandman, and, in many districts, the application of irrigation will produce for ever, without any manure, crops of almost incredible richness. But this necessary watering is not, in most parts of Persia, supplied by unaided Nature to the hand of man. No level Delta, as in Egypt and some parts of the banks of the Ganges, is annually submerged by the fertilizing floods of Nature. The whole plain of Mesopotamia is, indeed, susceptible of an artificial supply of water. Its extraordinary natural declivity, first from the Euphrates to the Tigris, and then from the Tigris to the Euphrates,* affords the utmost facilities to irrigation, of which the old ditches and channels intersecting the country in every direction which still exist, prove that the ancients availed themselves with the utmost industry. But to construct this vast system of irrigation, or even to keep it up when effected by former ages, requires a great and unremitting exertion of labour and industry, and such exertions never will be made under a government which affords so little security for property as that which is at present established in Persia. And hence the sterility which has thus, throughout a succession of ages, blasted this garden of the human race. The old channels for the conveyance of water were neglected or allowed to get into disrepair during some of the Tartar invasions; the insecurity of property, under subsequent dynasties, rendered their restoration impossible; the richest plain in the world was immediately converted into a moving sand; and the neighbouring waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris, fed by the eternal snows of the Caucasus, have, for ages, rolled their undisturbed waters to the Indian Ocean.

* Gillies's Greece, v. 89.

But, although it is owing to this cause that the great plain of Mesopotamia has become so utterly unproductive in later times, yet there are many situations in Persia where water can be obtained with more facility, and where, consequently, the human race have clustered in greater numbers round the fountains of life and fertility. The numerous mountain-ranges with which the country abounds, many of which branch off from the great central ridges of the Taurus or the Caucasus, where they are fed by perennial snows, afford very generally, in the hilly districts, the means of irrigation at no great expense; and it is there, accordingly, that population and cultivation are to be found. Around the clear streams which descend in these beautiful valleys, human industry has concentrated its efforts, and the green field and the smiling village are to be seen as far as the art of man has been capable of conducting the water. In many of these asylums of peace and innocence, the oppression of the Pachas is but slightly felt; the difficulty of access, the weakness of government, and the boldness of the people, have compelled an equitable adjustment of the public tribute, and a due observance of the rights of the village communities; and there the human race appear to enjoy as much happiness as is to be met with in any part of the habitable globe.

In former days, the water obtained from these mountain-streams was not permitted to flow, as it now does, in undisturbed seclusion through the plains; but it was drawn off, often to the distance of thirty, forty, or fifty miles, in order to spread irrigation and fertility through distant and inferior regions. This was done, not by open canals and ditches, as in the plain of Mesopotamia, which the uneven surface of the

ground generally rendered impossible, but it was effected in this manner: the levels of the whole line intervening between the point from which the water was to be drawn, and that to which it was to be conveyed, were taken, and a calculation made what declivity was required to make the water flow from the one point to the other. And having done this, wells were sunk at short intervals along the whole line, and then a subterraneous passage from one well to the other constructed, working from one to the other, till they met, so as to form a continuous subterraneous passage the whole way. Such is the productive nature of the soil generally in Persia, wherever water can be brought to it, that the expense of bringing a supply of that necessary fluid in this way, it is generally calculated, unless the distance which the water is to be brought is very great, will be extinguished by the produce in five years. It is remarkable, that this is just the time which every practical farmer in the clay districts of England knows it requires to reimburse the cost of tile-draining in Great Britain; the returns of Nature after bringing water to the soil in one part of the world, being nearly the same as are obtained by taking it away in another.*

This peculiarity in the physical condition of Persia sufficiently explains both its immense population and power when it was the centre of commerce, and enjoyed the protection of a powerful government in ancient times, and the deplorable state of decay into

* I am indebted for this interesting account of the ancient irrigation of Persia to my esteemed and accomplished friend, Sir John Macneill, whose diplomatic labours and ability have done so much of late years to avert the decay of British influence in that important quarter of the globe.

which it has fallen in modern times. External disasters, political catastrophes, have fallen upon it with the same desolating and overwhelming force, with which they would affect, if existing to a similar degree, and overwhelm, the meadows of Holland, if the sea-dikes were to be allowed to go to decay; the plain of Lombardy, if its incomparable artificial system of irrigation were to be choked up; or the fens of Lincolnshire, if the great Bedford level were to be rendered useless from neglect. But the productive powers of Nature in Persia are undecayed; a tolerable administration of justice; a permanent security to property, would at once enable the industry of man to turn to their due account the boundless gifts of Nature; subterraneous channels would again convey to distant regions its clear mountain-streams; the plains of Mesopotamia would again wave with the rank luxuriance of a tropical vegetation; and a second Nineveh and another Babylon would renew, in the latter ages of the world, under happier auspices, and on a more durable basis, the prodigies of early civilisation.

Secluded in the solitude of central Asia, the inhabitants of AFFGHANISTAUN would have remained almost unknown to the researches of European enterprise, if the description of an enlightened and inquisitive traveller had not thrown a clear light upon the political state of the country, and the late memorable expedition of the British arms had not rendered it an object of general interest, and probably increasing information. The ample details which have already been given of the condition of the people in the oriental empires, leaves room only for the observation in regard to this interesting people, that their condition differs in many important aspects from that of

any other Asiatic state, and that in their valleys are to be found the clear rudiments of those institutions which have given stability and greatness to the European monarchies. From Mr Elphinstone's admirable account of Caboul, it is evident, that, more distinctly even than in the woods of Germany, the rudiments of a representative government and of a considerable popular check on the despotic inclinations of the sovereign, are to be found in the states of Affghanistaun; and that, in consequence, property is far better respected, and industry far more general in its valleys, than in any other part of Asia. An hereditary aristocracy exists, land descends in a direct line, and the general administration is stable. The effect of this appears both in the industry of its inhabitants which has, as generally in the Swiss valleys, carried the garden cultivation far up the mountain-sides; in the brave and independent character of the people, which has given their soldiers the same renown in the Indian, which the Swiss colony enjoyed in the European wars; and in the number of the inhabitants, which, notwithstanding the sterile and inhospitable nature of the greater part of the country, amounts to fourteen millions.*

It is a curious and highly important subject of speculation, What it is which has given its peculiar and remarkable character to European civilisation, and communicated that extraordinary energy to the middle and lower classes of the people, by which, not less than the hereditary descent of power and property in the families of the higher, the civilisation of the race of Japhet has in all ages been distinguished? If we survey the institutions of any of the barbarous conquerors

* Elphinstone's Caboul, ii. 290, 303. Malte Brun, ii. 325, 336, 337, 353.

who descended from the wilds of Tartary into the plains of Persia, India, or China, we shall find that they were almost precisely the same with those which our Gothic ancestors implanted in the conquered provinces of the Roman empire. In both, a victorious chief or general took possession of a conquered country, confiscated half the land it contained to the use of his officers and their followers, and appointed his principal officers the chiefs of the conquered provinces, who established themselves in its best fortified strongholds, and maintained their authority over the subject territory by means of the armed force of their followers. But how prodigious the difference between the superstructure, which in Europe and Asia has been reared on this common foundation, and how striking the contrast between the subsequent institutions of these different regions! Between Persia, shrunk now to less than a tenth part of its ancient greatness, population, and power, and now crouching before the encroachments of Muscovite dominion; and Great Britain, the abode of naked savages in the time of Xerxes and Darius, and now planting its colonies in every quarter of the globe, and sending its victorious arms from the shores of the Ganges into the heart of Asia, and the cradle of Mahometan power! Effects of this sort outstrip the ken of the human faculties: they indicate the agency of some unseen Power, which has thus, for inscrutable purposes, decreed so different a destiny to the families of the human race; and bespeak the awful responsibility which rests on those, to whom the fortunes, in any degree, of that race, are entrusted, which has evidently been selected by Providence for the dissemination of religion, liberty, and knowledge among mankind.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN EUROPE.

ARGUMENT.

General character of the situation of the People in Europe—Action of the Principle of Increase in France—In Switzerland—In Flanders and Holland—In Sweden and Norway—In Russia—In Poland—In Italy—In the Spanish Peninsula—In Germany—In Ireland—In Great Britain.

WHATEVER may be the difference of the condition of mankind in the European monarchies, there are some peculiarities which distinguish them from the inhabitants of any other quarter of the old world. In all the blessings of the Christian religion have been communicated to the people; in all the government is stable, and supported by a powerful territorial aristocracy;* in all a tolerable degree of security has been afforded to industry. Taxes in many places are heavy; rent is oppressive; feudal rights are severe; but these exactions, though often extremely burdensome and destructive to the developement of the due regulations of the principle of increase, are founded on certain fixed principles, the observance of which is enforced in the courts of law. The terrible insecurity of property,—the unrestrained exactions of arbitrary power—which in every age have been felt as so destructive in oriental states, are in a great measure un-

* France, since the Revolution, must be excepted, and it has accordingly exchanged European for Asiatic civilisation.

known; the means of subsistence are in general afforded to the people; so is the power of commanding conveniences or gratifying artificial wants which is denied them; and, consequently, the diseased action of the principle of increase is felt rather in the redundant numbers than the thinned ranks of the people. And the effects of this appear in the most striking manner in the general density of the population: for in Europe, which contains 2,742,000 square miles of territory, there are 227,000,000 of inhabitants,* being at the rate of 81 to the square mile: whereas in Turkey in Europe, and Asia, the population is 25,000,000 scattered over a surface of 815,000 square miles; being at the rate of only about 28 to the square mile: while in China, including Chinese Tartary, there are 5,350,000 square miles, and a population of 200,000,000; being at the rate of 37 to the square mile: and in Hindostan, the population of 134,000,000, spread over a surface of 1,280,000 square miles, is at the rate of 101 to the square mile:—not half the population of Europe if the superior fertility of the soil and the double crops in the year are taken into consideration.†

But, independent of this vast difference between Europe and all the rest of the world, there are subordinate distinctions between its various states, and differences in the action of the principle of increase, according to the varieties of religious government and prevailing customs, which are in the highest degree important and interesting; and which renders a separate examination of its principal monarchies an object indispensable in a work of this description.

* Malte Brun and Balbi, vi. 84, 85.

† Humboldt, xi. 55, 56. Malte Brun, i. 4, and Appendix, No. IV.

I.—France.

In France, the condition of the people prior to the Revolution was, generally speaking, indigent: whatever promised the appearance even of subsistence led to marriage, and the smallest properties were considered as a sufficient shock for the commencement of a family.* Their dress, their furniture, their food, indicated the general depression of the labouring classes.† Labour was at an average 76 per cent. cheaper in France than in England, that is, the French labourer was 76 per cent. worse clothed, fed, and lodged, than the same class in this country.‡ In the southern provinces the land was in general in the hands of metayers, who divided the produce of the soil with their landlords, and were not superior in condition to the English labourers.§ The situation of the people in the wine provinces, where property is for the most part extremely subdivided, was still more depressed;‖ where the vicissitudes of the produce exposed the peasantry to losses which their poverty rendered them little able to bear;¶ and where the constant employment afforded to the females and children in cultivating the vines, afforded an unceasing impulse to population.**

The inhabitants of towns in France were for the most part better off than the peasantry of the country, as they possessed more varied methods of earning their subsistence, and enjoyed the means, by skill and industry, of rising in life.†† But everywhere almost throughout the country, the condition of the labour-

* Young's Travels, i. 470 and 18. † Ibid. i. 399. ‡ Ibid.
§ Marshall's Travels, iv. 308, 186; Young, i. 342.
‖ Marshall, iv. 101; Young, i. 370. ¶ Marshall, i. 101.
** Marshall, i. 101.
†† Moore's View of Society in France, i. 105.

ers indicated some general causes of depression, which the exertions of individuals were unable to overcome.*

That the French peasantry should generally have been poor, will not appear surprising when their political situation at that period is considered. Wherever the metayer system was established, the share of the proprietor was a *half* of the produce, whereas in England his share is from a *fourth* to a *sixth*.† Heavy taxes on the farmer, from which the clergy and nobility were exempt, aggravated by the arbitrary manner in which their amount was fixed by the intendant, and the vexatious feudal privileges of the landed proprietors, depressed the labouring classes, and rendered prosperity and good management little more than a signal for increased assessment.‡ Such was the accumulated effect of these burdens, that the produce of an acre being estimated under the old regime, at L. 3, 2s. 7d., the King drew L. 1, 18s. 4d., the landlord 19s. 3d., and to the cultivator was left the miserable pittance of *five shillings*, or *one-twelfth* of the whole, and *one-eighth* of the proprietor's share : or if the proprietor cultivated his own land, the King drew L. 1, 18s, 4d., and the proprietor only L. 1, 4s. 3d.§ Whereas in England, the produce of an acre being calculated at L. 8, the rent may be stated at L. 1, 10s.; land tax and poor's rates 10s., and there remains *six pounds* for the farmer, being *twelve times* the amount of the public burdens, and *four times* that of the rent to the landlord.‖

It was rare at that period to see a farm adequately stocked in the French provinces : nothing was

* Moore's View of Society in France, i. 105. † Young, i. 342.
‡ Young, i. 342 and 401. § Marshall, iv. 332. ‖ Ibid. 333.

expended which could possibly be avoided.* The capital of an English farmer being estimated at L. 4, that of the French cultivator would not exceed L. 2. "It would require," said Mr Young, in 1793, "L. 450,000,000 Sterling, to bring France to the same state of agricultural improvement as England; nor is this surprising, when the burdens affecting the labour of the cultivators is considered."†

Extreme ignorance universally prevailed among the rural population; it was very rare to see a peasant who could either read or write.‡ The multiplied oppression of the cultivators would have led them to emigrate, but their limited information chained them to the possessions of their forefathers.§ At a short distance from Paris, in 1792, Mr Young found the people entirely unacquainted with the events of the Revolution;‖ and even at this time, though much has been done to remedy the evil, there is not more than a third of the whole population of the kingdom who can read and write.¶

Nearly one-third of France at this period was in the hands of small proprietors, each of whom cultivated his little domain with his own hands. Their general condition was miserable in the extreme.** The public taxes fell with great severity upon this class, owing to the smallness of their possessions.†† "The necessary effect of this system was excellent husbandry, great population, and much misery among the poor; *for the burdens attaching to the small estates left the people a subsistence and nothing more.*" ‡‡

While such was the *general* situation of the peo-

* Young, i. 342. † Young, ii. 161. ‡ Ibid. ii. 217.
§ Marshall, iv. 68. ‖ Young, i. 117. ¶ Dupin, Force Com. i. 52, 53.
** Young, ii. 172. †† Marshall, iv. 17. ‡‡ Ibid.

ple in France, numerous *exceptions* were to be found, proving that the indigence which prevailed was not the necessary effect of the principle of population, but disappeared with the oppression which gave it birth. "In *Bearne* and *Bigorre*, the smiling aspect of the country, and the exquisite beauty of the scenery, attracted the attention of every traveller. "In Bearne," says Mr Young, "a scene presented itself so new in France, that I could hardly believe my own eyes: a succession of well-built comfortable farm-houses, subdivided by nicely clipt hedges, and admirably cultivated. An air of warmth, neatness, and comfort, reigns over the whole; every man has a farm, and enjoys the greatest prosperity; it is visible in their well built houses and stables, in their hedges, their farm-yards, even the coops for their poultry. The benignant genius of Henry IV. seems to reign over the country of his birth: *every peasant has his fowl in the pot.*"* "The districts of Bearne and Bigorre," says Swinburne, "are one of the most beautiful I ever beheld: the number of villages is too great to be reckoned, yet the fruitfulness of the fields demands more husbandmen to gather its riches.† Comfort and prosperity reign in all the dwellings of Bigorre; the attachment of the people to the place of their nativity is extreme; and they return from all parts of France to close their days there. The *populousness of the valleys* in the Pyrenees is *hardly credible*; yet *no symptoms of indigence* are to be seen."‡

The political condition of the people in these provinces explains the cause of the remarkable difference between their situation and that of the peasantry elsewhere in France. During all the changes of the monar-

* Young, i. 42. † Swinburne, iii. 108. ‡ Ibid. ii. 312.

chy in that kingdom, the states of Bearne and Bigorre had maintained their exclusive privileges wholly different from the other provinces in the kingdom. These states, like the British islands, had *a Parliament,* which met annually at Tarbes.* In these assemblies, all public matters were discussed, and all public burdens imposed. Taxation and expenditure were narrowly overlooked.† The Bearnois have in all ages possessed an independent spirit; and though their political power was abridged, yet they continued till the Revolution to enjoy very great privileges. Five hundred and forty gentlemen possessing fiefs sat in one house, which deliberated on subsidies, and all the concerns of the province.‡ The division of landed property, elsewhere so prejudicial in France, had here been found only to constitute the basis of a prosperous population.§

The condition of the people in France prior to the Revolution, therefore, is sufficiently obvious. The fertility of the soil and the riches of Nature provided the means of supporting an immense population; while the oppression of Government and the arbitrary exactions of the nobles precluded the developement of any of the limitations to the principle of increase. Ignorant and depressed, the peasantry were alike unable to leave the place of their nativity, or to engage in any branch of manufacturing industry: destitute of any enjoyments but those of nature, they had no resource but to contract an early marriage, and transmit to their posterity the same habits which they themselves had acquired. Under such a system, the land was overspread with an industrious but improvident and indigent population. Had France been blessed with a more equal government, she would have

* Swinburne, ii. 286. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. ii. 355. § Young, i. 42.

possessed a greater and more prosperous body of inhabitants; greater because other channels of industry would have been opened, and its burdens removed; more prosperous, because the limitations to increase, springing from the diffusion of happiness, would have been developed. The partial effects of a better administration of public affairs in those few situations where the remnants of a free government subsisted, afford the surest indication of the prosperity which the whole kingdom would have exhibited if blessed with similar advantages: like the oases in the Arabian desert, they exhibit a few green spots fed by living streams, on which the eye of humanity loves to dwell, when fatigued with the sterility and desolation of the surrounding wilderness.*

II.—Switzerland.

From whatever side a traveller enters *Switzerland;* from the level plains of Lombardy, from the arid fields of France, from the swelling hills of Swabia, or over the lofty ridge of the Jura, he is struck with the condition of the peasantry, not less than the sublime features of Nature. In the mountains, equally as the plains, the symptoms of ease and contentment prevail. On descending from the Jura into the plain of Neufchatel, the English traveller imagines that he has regained the enclosed fields and green pastures of English liberty:—features which are directly dependent on the political state of the country; for from the comfort of the peasantry spring the meadows which are to supply them with animal food; and from the

* This description has been purposely made applicable to France previous to the Revolution, as it is it which has mainly determined the state of the population as it now exists. The effects of that great convulsion on the condition of the people will be fully considered in the sequel, Chap. IX.

security and division of landed property, the enclosures and hedgerow timber which overshadow and beautify the landscape.* Nor is his surprise less on entering the defiles of the Alps, where the comfort of man seems to vie with the sublimity that surrounds him: where every spot capable of cultivation is sought out amidst the forests and cliffs that environ it; and where, amidst the recesses of Nature, freedom and happiness seem at last to have found an inviolable abode.

"Nothing," says Mr Coxe, "delights me so much as the interior of a Swiss cottage. All those I have hitherto visited convey the liveliest image of cleanliness, ease, and simplicity, and cannot but impress upon every beholder a most pleasing conviction of the peasant's happiness.† Contentment and comfort universally prevail: during my whole travels, I hardly met with one object of misery.‡ In many places, costly articles of furniture, as silver spoons, linen, &c. attest the opulence and frugality of the inhabitants, while in others the expensive ornaments of dress which are generally worn, indicate a very great degree of affluence in their possessors. The substantial and cleanly houses of the peasantry, especially in the Cantons of Underwalden, Berne, and Lucerne,§ the luxuriant fruit trees that overshadow their dwellings, the admirable neatness with which their possessions are cultivated, and the prosperous look of the people themselves, make an impression on the mind of the beholder which the lapse of time is unable to efface."

In the level parts of the country every cottage has

* Young's Travels, i. 372; and personal observation.
† Coxe, i. 46. ‡ Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 234.
§ Moore's View of Society, ii. 334; and personal observation.

a little garden, and a small freehold attached, which the inhabitants cultivate with the utmost care: so that the whole plain resembles a vast garden, studded with beautiful cottages.* In the mountainous districts, each cottage has also a little garden or piece of grass attached to it, which is tended and mowed with the neatness of an English bowling-green, which, with a share in the hill pasture belonging to the district, and a right to cut wood to a certain extent in the impending forests, constitute the little domain on which the whole family is maintained.†

Though manufactures are very generally established in several of the Cantons, yet they do not appear in that demoralizing form which exists in France and England. Each peasant exercises his art in his own cottage, and his leisure hours are employed in cultivating his beautiful garden.‡ The jewellery and watches which are so much prized as female ornaments all over Europe, are made by little freeholders in the valleys of the Jura. Even the manufactures which require a combination of hands, are conducted by persons in the same situation: and the workmen, who have been engaged in the formation of the brilliant chintzes of Zurich and Soleure, retire in the evening to the gardens that surround their separate dwellings.§

A vast population is to be found in Switzerland, existing along with the utmost well-being of the peasantry. "The environs of Zurich," says Mr Coxe, "for the mild beauties of Nature and the well-being of the peasantry, is not surpassed by any spot on the habitable globe." || Yet the density of the population

* Coxe, i. p. 82–104. † Raymond. ‡ Coxe, ii. 104.
§ Ebel, Manuel de Voyageur. || Coxe; and personal observation.

in this district is unequalled in any part of Europe. The inhabitants are exceedingly industrious. There are in the whole Canton 217,000 acres in grain, 42,000 in vineyards, and 103,000 in forests; and it contains 175,000 souls, which is about an individual to every $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres,—a degree of density exceeding that of Ireland, where, for 26,000,000 arable acres, there are 8,000,000 inhabitants. * You will look in vain, however, for the misery of Ireland on the banks of the Lake of Zurich. Indigence is nowhere to be found. Wherever you turn your eyes, smiling cottages with green windows and white walls are alone to be seen, half-concealed by the luxuriant fruit trees that surround them, or glittering in the sunny margin of the lake. Considering how large a proportion of the canton is rock or forest, this population is enormous. In five parishes on the borders of the lake, there are 8498 souls, and they contain only 6050 acres of arable land, 3407 of pasture, and 698 of vines, or scarcely *an acre and a quarter to each individual*†—a degree of density surpassing that of any other part of Europe. Yet there is nowhere to be seen such an extraordinary degree of comfort among the peasantry.‡ The canton of Appenzel contains 49,000 souls, a prodigious number, considering that the greater part of it is inaccessible rocks. The whole valleys both in that canton and in Lucerne are a continued village, being thickly strewed with excellent cottages. §

Without doubt, distress exists to a certain extent in Switzerland, and a failure of their ordinary means of subsistence, among a people so little within the

* Coxe, Vol. i. 76. † Ibid. i. 106, 107. ‡ Ibid.
§ Ibid. i. p. 104, and i. p. 106, 107; and personal observation.

reach of commercial assistance, produces very general suffering. But that the condition of the people is, upon the whole, eminently prosperous, and that the density of the population has not hitherto had any prejudicial effect upon their social condition, has been attested by every traveller, and is open to every person's observation.

The political state of the country sufficiently explains the causes of the extraordinary degree of public prosperity which is conspicuous in its inhabitants.

Switzerland is the land of peasants. With a very few exceptions, the whole country is cultivated by the *proprietors of the soil.* Taxation is extremely mild, and the public expenditure is watched in every canton with the most jealous eye.* No rapacious landlord or steward, as in the Irish plains; no grinding tax-gatherer, as in the French monarchy, prior to the Revolution,—is at hand to wring from the peasant nine-tenths of what he has gained for the service of his needy superiors: whatever he earns, he earns for himself and his family, and transmits in peace to his posterity. The national defence is almost entirely conducted by a militia, in which every man capable of bearing arms is obliged to serve. This duty is highly prized by the younger part of the peasantry, and inspires them with the most animating ideas of their own independence. † Education is very generally diffused; almost every village has its schoolmaster, who is maintained by government; and it is extremely rare to see a peasant who is not instructed in reading and writing. ‡ The information prevalent

* Moore's View, i. 339. † Coxe, iii. 66, 67. ‡ Ibid. ii. 306, 307.

among the people is often extraordinary. Amidst the sequestered forests of the Upper Vallais, Mr Coxe met a peasant who was intimately acquainted with the whole circumstances of the American war:* and at Geneva, it is not unusual to see mechanics, in the intervals of their labour, studying Newton and Montesquieu. † In the democratic cantons, every male above twenty-one has a vote in public affairs;‡ and in those which are aristocratical, though oppression is occasionally complained of, yet, upon the whole, the fruits of industry and the enjoyments of property are effectually secured.§ The effect of these concurring causes has been, that habits of foresight, industry, and frugality, have been universally diffused through the country; and along with the cultivation which has peopled the land, have been developed the habits and desires which regulate its increase. Nor has the public tranquillity been ever disturbed by the privileges which the people enjoy; on the contrary, they are more ardently attached to old institutions than any of their neighbours; and the love of change has in every age found in them fewer advocates than in any other part of Europe. ||

It is the influence of these favourable political circumstances, not any peculiarities in their country or physical situation, which has occasioned the prosperous conditions of the Swiss peasantry. Wherever their political situation is different, the aspect of the population is diametrically opposite. The authority of the Abbot of Engelberg is nearly absolute over his diminutive territory at the foot of Mount Titlis. Unlike their neighbours in the forest cantons, the vassals of the

* Coxe, ii. 97. † Moore's View, i. 339. ‡ Planta's Hist. ii 285.
§ Moore, i. 339. || Planta's Hist. i. 234. Coxe, ii. 217.

abbey are poor and indolent.* The Italian Bailiwicks have no share in the representative government of the country; they are the subjects, not the members of the Swiss confederacy.† Freedom has never prevailed in those beautiful districts, where the riches of Nature are poured out with so unsparing a hand.‡ The consequence is that they are indigent and miserable. In the heart of the boundless luxuriance of Nature, amidst sunny slopes and chesnut groves, the aspect of the population is that of want and suffering.§ The traveller, accustomed to the opulence and independence of the Swiss peasantry, shudders when he hears the inhabitants of these delightful valleys exclaim, "*Non ho niente que la mia povera miseria,*" and crouch for alms from every passenger, whom they would not scruple to murder, if it could be done with impunity to themselves.‖ Returning from the trellised vineyards, and chesnut forests of the Tessino, he repasses with pleasure the snowy summit of the St Gothard, where, amidst the sterile mountains of Uri and Underwalden, a nobler spirit has been nursed, and more virtuous habits prevail, from the influence of freedom on the character of the people.

III.—Flanders and Holland.

As if to demonstrate that the welfare of mankind is not owing to any peculiarities of soil, climate, and physical situation, but depends on the political institutions which prevail amongst them, the people of Europe who approach nearest to the inhabitants of the Swiss mountains are the natives of the level plains of *Flanders*. The free spirit and mild government

* Coxe, ii. 320. † Ibid. ii. 321. ‡ Planta, ii. 167.
§ Ebel, i. 594. ‖ Ibid.; and personal observation.

of the old Burgundian provinces has produced its usual effect upon the character of the people, and the principle of population; industry prevails and wealth has been accumulated; whilst the increase of the people has been restrained within the bounds which the circumstances of society require.

In every part of Flanders the rural scene presents the most agreeable objects: fields covered by fruitful crops, meadows feeding numerous herds, neat and commodious farm-houses, set singly or in groups, villages embowered with trees, and divided from each other by small intervals.* The bounty of nature is diffused in decent competence through the multitude that inhabits it, and the wholesome fare and neat dwellings of the labourer, attest that he receives his share of the riches with which nature crowns his fields.† A vast population is diffused through the country, each of whom finds in the produce of his little farm, or in the manual labour which the husbandry of his neighbour requires, the means of abundant livelihood.‡ The distinguishing features of the country are, the industry and riches of the inhabitants, the number, magnitude, and population of the cities, and the unrivalled perfection to which the cultivation of the soil has been carried.§ Commerce and manufactures have shared in the vicissitudes of political affairs, and the industry of the cities is in most places on the decline; but agriculture is undecayed, and in its different branches the numerous inhabitants find the means of a comfortable maintenance.‖

* Shaw's Netherlands, p. 73. Agric. Rep. Vol. i.; and personal observation.

† Shaw's Netherlands, p. 74.

‡ Ibid. p. 85.

§ Marshall's Travels, ii. 65.

‖ Ibid. p. ii. 66. Shaw, p. 92.

Farms are generally small, seldom exceeding twenty or thirty acres, and often not amounting to one-third of that size.* The horticultural system of husbandry universally prevails, and the whole country in many places resembles a vast kitchen-garden, in which manual labour is unsparingly employed. The food and clothing of the peasantry is substantial, and the fare of the middling ranks is often superior to that of the English gentry.†

The aspect of the population is not less remarkable in the provinces of Holland. The Dutch peasantry everywhere exhibit the most striking marks of industry, frugality, and cleanliness: their implements of husbandry, cattle, hedges, roads, and houses, bespeak the riches and comfort of their possessors.‡ "Passing from Westphalia into the United Provinces," says Reisbeck, "is like going from a pig-stye into a garden: nothing can exceed the industry, frugality, and comfort of the people in the midst of the greatest physical disadvantages."§ Even at the present time, when the channels of commerce have changed, and the oppression of Napoleon had for so many years ruined the industry of its commercial cities, and exhausted the wealth of their inhabitants, the neatness and comfort of the country astonishes every traveller. In the long line of villages and detached houses, which are adjacent to the road, you look in vain for a broken tile, and the dwellings of the peasantry form a model for the ornamented cottages of the English nobility. ‖

The prosperous condition and vast population of the Netherlands are sufficiently explained by the fertility of the soil, and leniency of the government under which

* Shaw, 68. † Young's Travels, ii. 29; and personal observation.
‡ Marshall, i. 166. § Reisbeck, iii. 294. ‖ Personal observation.

they have long been placed. The great charter of the liberties of Brabant, in former times, was the *joyeuse entré*, which was a solemn compact between the king and people, in which the latter were absolved from their allegiance in the event of the former violating their privileges.* The rights of the people are there defined in the most accurate way, and during a long course of ages their sovereigns of every dynasty governed according to its stipulations. Universally the states possess the power of levying taxes and granting subsidies, and the people are judged by magistrates of their own appointment.† These taxes are not arbitrarily imposed, but strictly according to the fortune of the subjects. Personal liberty and the security of property are effectually provided for; and no edict of the sovereign can pass into a law till it is ratified by the council of the state.‡ With these limited powers the old Dukes of Brabant and Burgundy ruled these provinces, and with such limitations in later times have the sovereigns of Spain and Germany, and still more lately of Holland and Belgium, governed.§ Their distance from the metropolis of the countries to which they have successively belonged, and the danger of exciting discontent in such powerful provinces, long acted as a curb on the arbitrary temper of the governments to which they were subjected, and hence they have continued to enjoy their ancient privileges, even when forming part of the inheritance of mighty monarchs, who in other parts of their wide dominions have ruled with absolute sway.‖

It has been observed by Mr Smith, that, previous to the Revolution, the taxes of Holland were heavier

* Shaw, p. 185. † Ibid. 154. ‡ Ibid. 162.
§ Watson's Philip II. Vol. ii. p. 124. ‖ Ibid. 193.

than those of any other country in Europe;* but, nevertheless, the industry of the country was not depressed. The reason was, that the imposts were levied with a strict regard to the fortunes of individuals, and that no class was exempted from their burden.† In this respect the taxes of France, anterior to the Revolution, afforded a striking contrast to those of the united provinces: for the *taille*, from which the nobles, soldiers, and clergy were exempted, ‡ fell with intolerable severity on the poorer classes, and being levied according to the supposed ability of the individual, rendered any increase of stock or comfort, an immediate signal for an increase of burden.§ Hence the numerous beggars and general indigence of the French monarchy; while under severer *national* burdens the inhabitants of Holland exhibited all the symptoms of general prosperity.‖

The situation of the adjoining provinces, both on east and west, affords decisive evidence, that it was the tenor of their political institutions, not any peculiarities in their physical condition, which occasioned the welfare of the low countries. "Near Bouchaine," says Mr Young, "is the ancient division between the French and Flemish husbandry, and the fact is curious, yielding much food to those political speculations which arise in the mind on the contemplation of different governments, that Bouchaine stands but a few miles on the Austrian side of the old frontier of the kingdom. The line of division between good and bad husbandry agrees exactly with the line be-

* Wealth of Nations, ii. 94.
† Marshall, i. 190.
‡ Marshall, i. 190.
§ Young's Travels.
‖ Marshall, i. p. 191.

tween old France and Flanders. The conquests of the French, indeed, have pushed their dominions much farther: but this has not obliterated old distinctions, and it is most curious to see, that the merit of husbandry forms to this day a line clearly traced, between *the despotism of France, which depressed agriculture, and the free spirit of the Burgundian provinces, which cherished and protected it.* The distinction is certainly not owing to the soil, for there cannot be a finer plain than that which extends from Flanders to Orleans; a deep rich loam, capable of being applied to all the purposes of the Flemish husbandry, but lying under the unprofitable neglect of open fields, and disgraced by the execrable system of fallowing."* The agricultural distinction here pointed out by Mr Young, is in a great measure owing to the difference in the political condition of the two countries; for the fallows of France are unavoidable in a country where the peasantry are too poor to consume animal food; while the garden husbandry of Flanders has sprung from the opulence of the labouring classes, which has opened to the cultivator an inexhaustible market for the varied produce of the soil.

On the other side, between Liege and Aix La Chapelle, is the division between the ecclesiastical states of Cologne and the provinces of Flanders: and the line is not less clearly marked between the despotic government of the Electorate, and the freedom of the Flemish provinces. After traversing the open fields, and regretting the scanty and indigent population of the Electorate, the traveller surveys with delight the green fields, smiling cottages, and innumerable villages of the territory of Liege.†

* Young, i. 309. † Personal observation.

The examples of Switzerland and the Netherlands are peculiarly valuable, because they afford specimens of public felicity combined with the greatest degree of *density in the population.* The population of Flanders amounts to 507 the square mile, and that of Holland to 284: the Pays de Vaud contains 658, and the arable territory of Zurich 692: whereas France contains 214, and Great Britain 270.* The progress of population, therefore, affords no reason to anticipate an increase in the misery of the people, when it is accompanied by the political advantages which develope the limitations to its advance. Humanity would have no cause to regret an increase of the numbers of the species which should cover the plains of the world with the husbandry of Flanders, or its mountains with the peasantry of Switzerland.

IV.—Sweden and Norway.

The condition of the people in the *Scandinavian peninsula,* now happily united under one government, is in the highest degree prosperous and happy. "If you enter a Swedish cottage, it is with pleasure," says Catteau, "that you see the person that inhabits it. His food is simple, but substantial: his clothes, though coarse, are warm, and in good order: his dwelling, though rude, is clean and comfortable." † You may traverse Sweden from one end to the other without meeting with a single beggar, or entering one house where the inmates exhibit the appearance of hopeless indigence. ‡ Even in the remotest parts of the country the symptoms of general comfort are

* Humboldt, xi. 58; and Stat. Mag., i. 194; and Almanack de Gotha, 1835.

† Catteau, 243. ‡ Clarke's Travels, x. p. 172.

to be found.* In Finland, and round the whole shores of the Gulf of Bothnia, they live in the most comfortable manner. Contentment and plenty are to be found in all their dwellings; and there is a cheerfulness and activity in their manner which indicates that they are perfectly happy.† If they have more money than they have immediate use for, they lay it up, or convert it into some costly article of furniture. Hence the traveller is daily astonished at the pieces of plate or other expensive moveables which he finds in their cottages.‡ Milk, butter, cheese, and dried fish are everywhere to be had in plenty; and it is frequently with difficulty that the peasantry can be prevailed upon to accept any thing in return for the comfortable fare which they have furnished to the traveller.§

Abundance and contentment reign in all the dwellings of the Laplanders. Every cottage has a number of cows attached to it, which furnish milk and butter in abundance, and such a store of dried fish as not only suffices for their own use, but yields a considerable surplus for exportation.‖ The bountiful hand of Nature has given them rich pastures which need no cultivation; and above all, says Acerbi, the land on which they tread *they can call their own.* There is no master to trouble them, or inspire them with fear or apprehension.¶

"The peasantry in *Norway* are all well fed, clothed, and lodged, and appear to possess," says Coxe, "more of the comforts and conveniences of life than I have seen in the course of my travels, excepting in some parts

* Clarke's Travels, x. p. 312. † Ibid. x. p. 417. Marshall, iii. 65.
‡ Acerbi, i. 121. § Ibid. ii. 106. ‖ Ibid. ¶ Ibid.

of Switzerland."* A traveller must be blind who does not instantly perceive the difference between the free peasants of Norway, and the enslaved vassals of Denmark, though forming so long part of the same government.† Their dress, appearance, and manner, as well as the structure of their dwellings, and the sublime features of the scenery in which they live, frequently reminded me, says Clarke, of the Swiss peasantry.; to whom they are nowise inferior, either in personal comfort, or the feeling of independence.‡

Population, notwithstanding the universal *subdivision* of landed property,§ advances with *very slow steps* in Sweden and Norway. In Norway, the proportion of marriages to the subsisting population is as 1 to 130; in Sweden as 1 to 110.‖ The population of Sweden, in 1751, was 2,290,000; and in 1772, 2,584,000;¶ and in 1840 about 3,000,000.** But it is the want of roads and internal communication which is the sole cause of this slow increase, as Scandinavia certainly might maintain four times its present number of inhabitants;†† and at the taking of Constantinople, in 1448, contained 1,800,000 fighting men, or above 7,000,000 of souls.‡‡ It has been found by experience, that where there is a sufficient demand for their labour they multiply as fast as could be wished.§§

The political condition of the people readily explains the cause of their eminently prosperous circumstances.

From the earliest periods a great degree of freedom

* Coxe, v. 10. † Ibid. v. 10–11. ‡ Clarke, x. 131, 153, 448.
§ Marshall, iii. 91. Acerbi, ii. 146.
‖ Tooke's Russia, ii. 146. ¶ Catteau, 209.
** Bremner's Sweden and Norway, i. 231; and Stat. Mag. ii. 194; and Malte Brun, viii. 565.
†† Catteau, 237. ‡‡ Gibbon, Vol. xii. 217. §§ Marshall, iii. 43.

has subsisted both in Sweden and Norway.* The houses of *peasants* in the former kingdom have long formed a bulwark against the encroachments of sovereign power; and the privileges of the people have not been confined to mere forms, but have extended to those particulars which most nearly concern their habits and welfare. The peasantry are composed of three classes; the tenants of the king, of the nobles, and those who hold lands in property under the crown, so long as they pay their fixed rents, from which last class the house of cultivators is elected.† The peasants of the crown have a right to purchase up their rents and convert them into taxed lands, that is, into freeholds burdened with a certain annual duty.‡ In practice almost all the farmers of the country possess *lands of their own*; it is extremely rare to see a house which has not a garden and pasture land attached to it.§ This is the great cause of the superior comfort of the Swedish to the English peasantry; for the little pieces of land, and the shares of the wastes which are attached to each cottage, are of infinite service in the maintenance of a family, and they are in general most carefully and industriously cultivated.‖ In Finland and Lapland every peasant is the proprietor of the land on which his house stands, and of a little territory around it; which in remote situations extends to the distance of six miles in every direction.¶ Round the whole shores of the gulf of Bothnia, the country is in the hands of a series of little freeholders, who, in comfort and opulence, are inferior to none in the habitable globe.**

* Catteau, 149. Coxe, v. 10. † Catteau, 243. ‡ Ibid. 110.
§ Acerbi, i. Marshall, iii. 91. Catteau, 247.
‖ Catteau, iii. 93. Malte Brun, viii. 520, 522.
¶ Acerbi, ii. 106. ** Clarke, x. p. 498.

The condition of property is nearly the same in Norway. Excepting on a few estates the peasantry are all free, and on these the proprietor loses his privileges if he ceases to reside among his people.* Landed property *is extremely subdivided*, and the industry with which the peasants cultivate their little domains, is in the highest degree admirable.† The precarious tenure by which Denmark held possession of Norway, has compelled the government to respect the privileges of the people, even in opposition to its usual maxims; and hence its liberties have been preserved, though it has so long formed part of a despotic country.‡

Education is perhaps more generally diffused throughout Sweden than in any other country of Europe; the peasantry are not only taught to read and write, but are acquainted with the leading facts in the history of their country.§ "There is no country in Europe," says Acerbi, "where education is so generally diffused as in Sweden, excepting, perhaps, Geneva and Scotland; the peasantry put questions to us which prove that they were greatly superior both in understanding and intelligence to a similar class in other states."‖ All the peasantry are enrolled and exercised in the national militia, which contributes much to support the free and independent spirit by which they are distinguished. Every soldier in the regular army has a house and piece of land annexed to his station;¶ and hence regularity and good conduct characterize even those classes in which profligacy is usually most conspicuous. In the war against Russia

* Coxe, v. 10. † Clarke, x. p. 153. ‡ Coxe, v. 10.
§ Catteau, 243. Coxe, v. 11. ‖ Acerbi, i. 271.
¶ Coxe, v. 10. Catteau, 247.

in Finland in 1809, every soldier had a Bible in his knapsack.

In consequence of these favourable circumstances, the usual limitations to the principle of population have been strongly developed both in Norway and Sweden, and the country rather suffers from a want of hands, than feels the burden of redundant numbers.* *None of the children will ever brook the idea of living worse than their parents did before them,*† and the pride of superior condition and the habits of foresight which prevail, supply the place of those artificial wants which are generally found to be the most effectual limitations to the principle of increase.

The population of Scandinavia is very thinly scattered over the soil; in Sweden it amounts only to 14 the square mile, and in Norway to 9.‡ Public happiness, however, is not affected by this circumstance, any more than the physical situation of the country; it is to be found alike amidst the thick set vineyards of Zurich, or the crowded plains of the Netherlands, as the solitary forests of Norway, or the sequestered lakes of Finland. It is government and the state of property which permanently affect the condition of mankind; it is this cause which has in these remote countries counterbalanced all the disadvantages of a severe climate and a sterile soil; and which may put so many southern states to the blush for the great capabilities of improvement which they have neglected, and the unbounded gifts of Nature which they have misapplied.

* Marshall, iii. 43. † Ibid. iii. 44, and Stat. Mag. i. 194.
‡ Malte Brun, viii. 563 and 561.

V.—Russia.

Placed under the same latitude, and sprung originally from the same parent stock, the people of *Russia* exhibit as marked a contrast to those of Scandinavia as is to be found in the whole extent of the habitable globe. Without adopting the position of an intelligent modern traveller, that the frontier between Sweden and Russia marks the line between the extremes of freedom and slavery, of civilisation and barbarism,* it may safely be affirmed, that the condition and habits of the people in the two countries afford the most striking proof of the influence of government upon the character and happiness of mankind.

Over the wide extent of the Russian territory, the desires of the peasantry are few, and they seldom feel the want of the actual necessaries of life. The Russian boor has a single instrument, an axe, with which he performs all his operations; fells his trees, constructs his dwelling, and makes his furniture.† The movables of his cottage, as might be expected from such implements, are simple in the extreme; a rude table and benches, a few plates, basons, and spoons, all of wood, and generally an earthen pot for cooking the victuals of the family.‡ Their houses are for the most part roomy and in tolerable repair; their clothing coarse, but warm and substantial, consisting generally of a sheep skin with the wool turned in, and sandals made of birch boughs; and they have the look of being well fed.§

Every peasant procures a grant of land, consisting usually of 30 or 40 acres, from his lord, which is

* Clarke, xi. p. 374. † Tooke. ‡ Clarke, i. 170.
§ Ibid. i. 170. Heber's MS. Ibid.

amply sufficient to furnish subsistence for himself and his family.* Being entirely dependent, however, on the will of their landlords, their situation is in the highest degree variable. Their state is incomparably the best on the crown lands, and among the nobles those are most prosperous who are placed on the estates of the higher classes.† Among the lower ranks of landed proprietors, the condition is often abject and miserable.‡ "Traversing the country south of Moscow," says Clarke, "it is as the garden of Eden, a fine soil, covered with corn, and apparently smiling in plenty. Enter the cottage of the labourer, and you find him, though surrounded with these riches, often in want of the necessaries of life. Extensive pastures often furnish no milk to him; in autumn the harvest affords no bread to his children; every road is covered with caravans bringing the produce of the soil to the lords of Petersburg and Moscow, while the cultivators who raised it are in want of the necessaries of life."§

That the peasantry, nevertheless, have, generally speaking, an ample supply of the necessaries of life, however destitute they may be of its conveniences, is sufficiently demonstrated by the increase of the population. *Over the whole empire it doubles in forty-nine years:* the proportion of the births to the deaths is as 225 to 100, and the marriages to the subsisting population as 1 to 46, while in Norway it is as 1 to 130, and in Sweden as 1 to 110.‖ In the great cities, however, the progress of artificial wants has had its usual effects upon the rate of increase: there the marriages

* Clarke, i. 220–224. † Ibid. i. 224. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. i. 225, 226.
‖ Tooke's Russia, ii. 146, and ii. 262.

are to the numbers as 1 to 70.* The boors have generally very large families, frequently not less than twelve or fifteen children: but of these often not more than *one-fourth* arrive at maturity; a calamity mainly owing to the extraordinary mortality among the children of the peasantry, of which the instructions of Catherine make especial mention.† Artificial wants being unknown, and the means of subsistence in the vast territory of Russia abundant, the progress of population is limited only by the impossibility of rearing additional numbers.

By law all the peasantry of Russia are *slaves*: they can hold no real property; their children belong to the lord of the soil: they cannot remove or change their occupation without his consent: they are sold with the land, or may be disposed of without it like any other movable possession.‡ Next above the boors are the *free peasants*, who are allowed to hold real property but are limited in some particulars.§ The *colonies* are for the most part *free*, or held by the tenure of *military service*, and among them industry and population are advancing with very rapid strides.‖ There is a wide difference between the condition of the peasantry on the lands of the crown, and of the nobility.¶ "The former," says Heber, "are, comparatively speaking, in easy circumstances: their obrock or rent is *never raised*, being fixed at five rubles a head, and consequently they are *very industrious*. The peasants again belonging to the nobility have their obrock raised in an arbitrary manner, according

* Tooke's Russia, ii. 146. † Ibid. iii. 308.
‡ Tooke, B. IV. c. i. Coxe, iii. 181. § Ibid. Tooke.
‖ Tooke, Ibid. ¶ Ibid.

to their means of getting money, which operates as a direct tax on industry."* If they exercise a lucrative profession, the smallest earnings are subject to this oppressive burden, and as everything the peasant acquires belongs to his lord, there is no legal limit to these exactions.† Hence the necessity under which the slaves in mechanical trades experience of concealing the amount of their gains:‡ and the absence of the proprietor in the country is often as prejudicial as his presence in the cities, as he knows nothing of his peasantry excepting the tax which is remitted from their labour.§ The obrock paid by the peasants of the nobility is usually fixed at ten rubles annually, as a commutation for personal service: but it is frequently raised in the most arbitrary manner.‖ By strict law each peasant is bound to work three days in the week for his lord: but mutual advantage in general leads to a relaxation of this rule, and hence the custom of paying an obrock or annual rent as the price of working on his own account.¶

The indolence of the Russian peasants has frequently been made the subject of complaint. "We may assign," says Clarke, "a sufficient cause for their inactivity: it is *necessity*. Can there exist an incitement to industry when it is known that another will reap its fruits? The only property which a Russian nobleman will allow his peasants to enjoy is the food which he himself does not require; and if the slave has sufficient ingenuity to make money for himself, it becomes a dangerous possession, which, if discovered, is in danger

* Heber in Clarke, i. 170. † Clarke, i. 172. Coxe, iii. 181.
‡ Coxe, iii. 183. § Clarke, i. 90. ‖ Ibid. 168. ¶ Tooke, iii. 320.

of falling into his hands."* "When they have an interest to work," says Heber, "they *by no means want industry*, and have just the same wish for luxuries as other people. Great proprietors, such as Count Scheremetoff, who never raise their obrock, have very rich and prosperous peasants: and the industry of those on the crown lands is, for the reason already stated, always conspicuous."†

In the hands of a benevolent proprietor, however, the slavery of Russia is productive of much benefit.‡ The master is bound to furnish the slave with a house and a piece of land: the aged are provided with food and raiment at the owner's expense. If landlords were all just and humane men, no better system, in the circumstances of the country, could be devised: it is the fatal prevalence of injustice and selfishness which makes it productive of such injurious effects.§ To such an extent is the dread of exaction carried, that it is not unusual for the peasants to hide their acquisition, and even *bury it in the ground*; a custom prevalent all over the east, where property is seldom secure from arbitrary violence.‖

While such is the general condition of the Russian people, their situation in some particular places, under the influence of more favourable political institutions, exhibits a striking contrast, and indicates the capability of public happiness, which, under a more liberal system, the whole Russian people might enjoy. "The first regular establishment of the *Malo-Russians*," says Clarke, "was at Locova Sloboda; and it is difficult to conceive a more complete contrast than they

* Clarke, i. 171. † Heber. Clarke, i. 170. ‡ Coxe, iii. 183.
§ Heber. Clarke, i. 90, and 170. ‖ Coxe, iii. 183.

afford to the other inhabitants of the empire. Their houses were white-washed like the cottages in South Wales; and such cleanliness prevailed, that the traveller might conceive himself transported from Russia to Holland. Their stables, court-yards, and out-houses, everything, in short, that they had, indicated industry and neatness. They had abundance of poultry and cattle: their dress was neat and comfortable; their little gardens filled with fruit trees; in short, their cottages had a Welsh exterior and Norwegian interior, and the gardens and out-houses of the English peasantry." * Throughout the whole country, the same appearances were observable: everywhere cleanliness and comfort prevailed. If happiness could be found under the Russian government, it might be said to have its residence at Dobrinka, a peaceable and healthy spot, full of neat small cottages, tenanted by a healthy and contented society. They live in the greatest tranquillity, removed from all the spies, tax-gatherers, police officers, and other despots of the country. The Malo-Russians, with their numerous families, seated on the ground in circles round their neat little habitations, eating their supper, and all merry and contented together, afford a picture of contentment and peace rarely to be found in the Russian territories. †

Vassalage is almost unknown in this part of Russia: nearly the whole country is in the hands of *little proprietors, who are free, and cultivate their own domains.* ‡ "Almost all the farmers are proprietors of their farms," says Marshall, "with ten times the free-

* Clarke, i. 217. † Ibid. i. 225. ‡ Marshall, iii. 229.

dom I have seen elsewhere in Russia. * The old inhabitants, prior to the Russian conquest, were free, and property was very much subdivided among them: and though some of the nobility have now got vassals, yet, fortunately, the old state of things generally continues." † "The cultivation is generally admirable, rivalling the far-famed Flemish husbandry: but this is only among the free peasants; for where the land is in the hands of the nobles, it is neither so well cultivated, nor so fully peopled as in the little freeholds which surround their estates; a clear proof that the good cultivation of the Ukraine is owing to the peasants *being free, and proprietors of the land they cultivate;* for slavery is utterly inconsistent with a flourishing husbandry."‡

"Freedom," says Clarke, "is to be found in its fullest extent among the Cossacks; and nothing contributes so much to augment and improve their colony. Surrounded by systems of slavery, they exhibit the singular spectacle of an increasing republic, like a nucleus putting forth its roots and ramifications in all parts of an immense empire." § Free as a Cossack is a common proverb in Russia. They are exempted from taxes, and each village has a certain portion of land assigned to it, which is subdivided to every individual man. Their only obligation is to serve in the armies, which ceases after twenty-five years, and while it lasts, is much more than compensated by their immunity from feudal slavery. They are a bold, generous, and kind-hearted people, and their condition in a high degree prosperous and comfortable. ‖

* Marshall, iii. 171. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. 176.
§ Clarke, i. 286. ‖ Porter's Travels, i. 75–194; Clarke, i. 293.

The Russian empire exhibits, with these few exceptions, the spectacle of a vast and growing population, destitute of artificial wants, and surrounded by an unlimited profusion of mere subsistence. No situation more favourable to the mere multiplication of mankind can be imagined, than that of a country in which the government is sufficiently regular and powerful to secure to a certain extent the fruits of industry, and afford to the labouring classes an ample supply of the necessaries of life, while it is not so just and free as to afford the means of individual elevation, or develope the love of property or the influence of artificial wants among the people. In such a situation no motives can exist to induce men to resist the impulse to an early marriage, because no advantage is to be gained by postponing it, and population can be restrained only by the experienced inability of rearing a family. During the first stages of society, and before the greater part of the surface of the country is occupied, the human race, under a tolerable feudal aristocracy, may advance with great rapidity, and enjoy a certain degree of happiness in such political circumstances. But when society assumes a complicated form, and the corrupting influence of wealth has been fully felt in the higher classes, the misery and the danger of such degradation in the lower will be fully experienced. Then it is that "wealth accumulates and men decay:" that the labouring classes fall into a state of abject dependence on their superiors: and that the fortunes of the state, being sustained by no perennial flow of virtue and energy from the middling ranks, gradually sink into obscurity. Then the pressure of population upon the means of subsistence begins to be severely felt, in consequence of the absence of all those

limitations upon its increase which the progress of freedom and intelligence bring into operation. To all these complicated evils Russia will unquestionably be a victim, if she does not, when the period arrives when it can be done with safety, gradually emancipate her people from the ruinous state of domestic vassalage: and it is some consolation to the lovers of freedom to reflect, that this vast empire will surely experience the difficulties and the weakness incident to the old age of nations, unless she adopts the liberal institutions, and gives her subjects the general liberty, which are now thought to be threatened by her preponderance in the European commonwealth.

VI.—POLAND.

Notwithstanding all the advantages of a central situation, and a fertile soil, the people of POLAND have long been in a more abject state than even in the adjoining territories of Russia. In vain are her plains fruitful, and her rivers navigable; her warriors valiant, and her women fascinating; the choice gifts of Providence, both in the riches of Nature, and the character of man, have been destroyed by the *instability* of her government, the wildness of her democratic nobility, and the *servitude* of her people. In every part of her wide and fertile domains the poverty of the inhabitants is the first circumstance which attracts the eye of the traveller. * Dwelling in a country which vies with America in the riches of its virgin soil; employed in the production of the finest agricultural produce for the use of his more fortunate neighbours, the Polish peasant pines in hopeless indi-

* Pradt, Embassade à Varsovie, 89–92. Marshall, iii. 240. La Baume, Camp. de 1812, p. 20.

gence in the midst of the rude profusion of a rising cultivation. * While the waters of the Vistula waft splendid wheaten crops to the warehouses of Dantzic or Konigsberg, he receives no part of the agricultural riches which his labour has produced, but retires to his smoky hovel to rear a numerous family upon those coarser kinds of grain, which are rejected by the inhabitants of more prosperous states.†

The villages are everywhere the most wretched that can be imagined, consisting, for the most part, of a rude collection of wooden huts, in which the family and the cattle sleep together, with one chimney for their common apartment.‡ So imperfect is the shelter they afford from the severity of the climate, that even this aperture is closed in the autumnal months, and the inhabitants, during half the year, prefer being half-smothered with smoke, to perishing from the cold of a Scythian winter. § Miserable as these villages are, they are but thinly scattered over the country: you may often travel ten miles without beholding a single house: and the provinces have the appearance of small cultivated spots cut out of the vast and gloomy forests by which they are surrounded. ‖ Throughout the whole country you will look in vain for anything approaching to English comfort.¶

The abject poverty of the Polish peasantry will not be a subject of wonder when the multiplied oppressions to which they are subjected is considered. Slavery is here not less universal and still more rigorous than in Russia: estates are valued, as in the West Indies, chiefly at the number of serfs which they con-

* Burnett's Poland, 90; and Jacob's Report. † Ibid. p. 92.
‡ Marshall, iii. 340. § Burnett, p. 127.
‖ Rulhiere, Hist. de Pologne, i. 172–204. ¶ Coxe, i. 192.

tain, and they are transferred to a purchaser like so many head of cattle.* This slavery is of great antiquity, and, from the earliest times, was extremely rigorous: insomuch that the Chancellor Zamoyschi has enumerated no less than 100 statutes unfavourable to the peasantry.† The edicts against peasants leaving their masters' estates without leave are, in an especial manner, both numerous and severe, and hence, in a great measure, arises the wretchedness of this class of men, who are retained in the place of their nativity by the dread of the severest punishment.‡ Peasants are at the absolute disposal of individuals, and have *hardly any security either for their properties or their lives:* the condition of personal servants is still worse: compared with it, the vassalage of the Russian peasants would be deemed absolute freedom.§

Where the cultivators are in a state of vassalage their poverty is so extreme, that their whole stock in husbandry must be furnished by their lord, even the seed-corn, horses, and implements of agriculture.‖ The return exacted is abundantly severe; they are obliged to give up to him in return one-half of the profits of their labour.¶ What aggravates the misery of their situation is, that the exactions of the landlord are uncertain, and almost unlimited in their amount; the peasants never know when they have satisfied the demands of their masters.** In spite of these multiplied exactions, the income of the landlord is frequently contemptible, for it is engrossed by the stewards or bailiffs, who are the absolute scourgers of the people.†† Sometimes the proprietors give small grants of land to

* Coxe, i. 193. † Ibid. 194. ‡ Ibid.
§ Marshall, iii. 243. ‖ Coxe, i. 201. ¶ Burnett's Poland, 134–150.
** Marshall, iii. 243. †† Ibid. 240.

their vassals, but few of these grants are more than sufficient to keep the people from starving; and, in consequence of their precarious condition, few of the peasants improve the little stock which is communicated to them. Their conduct, like that of slaves in all parts of the world, is marked, for the most part, by carelessness and want of foresight.* Yet some instances of frugality and accumulation are beginning to appear, *especially in the enfranchised parts*, among which Gallicia is one: for the effect of the partition has been, that the people are less liable to be plundered.†

In those spots where the people of Poland have enjoyed any sort of respite from the miseries, slavery, and exactions in which their neighbours have been involved, they have exhibited the usual industry and frugality of the human species; and the principle of population has been, to a certain degree, regulated by reason and prudence. During the reign of Bodeslaus the chaste, and Casimiro the great, many Germans settled in Poland, who were indulged with the use of the German laws, and their descendants still continue to enjoy several privileges not possessed by the generality of Polish peasants. The good effect of these advantages *are very visible in their present condition*, and the habits of their domestic economy: their villages are better built, their fields better cultivated than those which belong to native Poles: they possess more cattle, pay their quit-rents with more exactness, and, when compared with the others, are cleaner and neater in their persons.‡

* Burnet's View of Poland, 90, 96. † Ibid.

‡ Coxe's Travels, i. 194.

The low population of Poland is not owing to any prevalence of moral restraint among the people, but to the absolute inability to rear a family, which arises from their miserable situation. In the enfranchised parts, accordingly, the population has considerably increased, and the revenues of the estates have increased in a treble proportion.* The births on the emancipated districts have increased in the proportion of 43 to 77.† In this state of vassalage, the old lord gave them, as already observed, cottages, cattle, seed, and barns; but since their liberty, they have increased so much in wealth as to be able to furnish themselves with these articles, and they likewise cheerfully pay an annual rent in lieu of their manual labour.‡ These effects are most conspicuous on the estate of Count Zamoiski. Yet so deplorable was the ignorance of these people, that few when emancipated were at first equal to the management of a farm. Even when made free, the condition of the peasants is precarious: for what one master gives, his successor may take away.§ But where it has been adopted, the good effects of such concession upon the habits of the people are most conspicuous, both in the wealth which has accrued to the proprietors, and the comfortable condition, comparatively speaking, of the tenantry.*‖

Real freedom, however, which the indulgence of a master has neither given, nor his caprice can take away, is only to be found in the *cities*. In these secure asylums, industry, comfort, and population have increased; and though their privileges have been impaired, the burghers still enjoy a great share of liberty.¶ It is stated in the *Jus Teutonicum*, as the

* Coxe, i. 199–201. † Ibid. 199. ‡ Ibid. 201. § Ibid.
‖ Marshall, iii. 258. ¶ Coxe, i. 190.

reason of its introduction, that no city could flourish under the feudal law: and yet it is to this law that the inhabitants of the country are still subjected.* They would fly for refuge to these asylums of freedom, were they not forcibly detained by their landlords.

The situation of the people in Poland is such, that though the principle of population is restrained by no prudential views in the individual, the obstacles to the increase of mankind are such as to prevent the rapid augmentation of his numbers. The tyranny of the aristocracy imposes an invincible barrier, not only to the increase of the wealth or the improvement of the condition, but to the multiplication of the numbers of mankind. The human species pines in the midst of the boundless luxuriance of nature, and a wilderness appears in scenes where she has been most lavish of the means of life and happiness. Notwithstanding the universal level and unbounded riches of their soil, the population of Poland is only 110 to the square mile: a proportion inferior to that of almost every other country of central Europe,† and not a fourth of what might be comfortably maintained.

The Polish nobility in their hour of need, have had good cause to lament the tyranny they have exercised over their people. When the existence of their country was at stake in the war which led to the partition in 1772, out of 14,000,000 inhabitants they *never could collect* 10,000 *men in one body to oppose the Russian invasion.*‡ When its restoration was contemplated by Napoleon 1812, the misery of the inhabitants was such that they could yield no assistance to the armies of France; interest at Warsaw was at 80 *per cent.*; the greatest families were obliged to borrow small

* Coxe, i. 190. † Malte Brun, vi. 671. ‡ Rulhiere, i. 273, and passim.

sums for their daily food; no efficient army could be raised, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the nobility; and the retreating forces of Napoleon, being unable to find any support in the country, were obliged to relinquish it to the permanent dominion of Russia.* If any thing could reconcile the friends of humanity to the iniquitous partition of Poland, it would be the ruinous oppression and experienced weakness of its ancient government. The poet, indeed, may exclaim with generous enthusiasm, "Sarmatia fell unwept without a crime:" but her national sins were in reality the greatest with which humanity is acquainted: universal oppression among the rich, insane democratic equality among the inferior electors above six hundred thousand in number, unmitigated slavery among the poor. But for these evils she might still have held her place in the Book of Life: Kosciusko, like another Frederick, might have applied the riches, and directed the energies of a greater people to the salvation of his country: and, secure in the valour of her sons, and the riches of her fields, Poland might have remained the bulwark of European freedom against the efforts of Asiatic power. Perhaps the destruction of her feudal aristocracy, and republican passions can only be accomplished by the iron grasp of military despotism: and if so, her people may yet have cause to bless that melancholy partition which, though it reduced them for a time, under the grievous yoke of foreign power, yet prepared in the influence of that power, the decay of those aristocratic privileges and ungovernable passions for equality, to which their past misfortunes and present humiliation have been owing.

* De Pradt, Embassade à Varsovie, 89, 90, 93.

Even in the infant state and growing civilisation of the Russian empire, the strongest examples of the importance and effects of the distribution of landed property among the poor are to be found; examples which are rendered more striking from the remarkable contrast which they afford to the general situation of the surrounding population, to whom such advantages have been denied.

The situation of the peasantry among the *Malo-Russians* is singularly comfortable. "The first regular establishment of these people occurred," says Clarke, "at *Locova Sloboda*. The houses were all white-washed, and this operation is performed annually, and with great care. Such distinguished cleanliness appeared in them that the traveller might fancy himself transported at once from Russia to Holland. Their court-yards, offices, furniture, all exhibited industry and neatness. In their kitchens, instead of the smoky hue prevalent in other parts of Russia, all is cleanness, comfort, and opulence. They had poultry and plenty of cattle; their little gardens were filled with fruit trees, giving an English character to their houses. In short, they had a Welsh exterior, a Norwegian interior, and the out-houses and gardens of the English peasantry. Their dress was neat, substantial, and comfortable. * * * * The distinction between the Russians and Malo-Russians was everywhere very striking. If happiness could be found under the Russian government, it might be said to have its residence here. The villages are full of neat little white cottages, tenanted by a healthy and apparently contented society. They live in the greatest tranquillity, removed from all the spies, tax-gatherers, and other despots of the country. We were received everywhere with a hearty

* Clarke, i. 284.

welcome and smiling countenances, very different from the lowering brows and suspicious eyes to which we had formerly been accustomed. The Malo-Russians in *Dobrinka*, with their numerous families, were seated on the ground in circles before their neat little habitations, eating their supper: and being all happy and many together, offered a picture of contentment and peace not often found within the Russian territories."*

The state of landed property among a people enjoying so great a degree of public and private happiness is peculiarly interesting and instructive. "*The property in it is very much subdivided;* there are very few estates belonging to nobles; the old inhabitants were free, and had much equality among them, and fortunately this equality in landed property continues under the Russian government. *Most of the peasants have little pieces of ground, which are their own property*, with ten times the liberty that is to be found elsewhere in Russia. The government are extremely cautious of offending them, from the precarious tenure of their government."† "Among these little freeholders, the cultivation is admirable, and rivals the boasted husbandry of Flanders. The greater part of the country is subdivided in this manner. Where it is in the hands of nobles, it is not nearly so well cultivated or peopled; a strong proof that the good husbandry is owing to the peasants being proprietors of the lands, and vassalage almost unknown among them. They have, it is true, a noble country, equal in soil to Flanders; but I have seen other provinces of that immense empire, not at all inferior in natural qualities to this,

* Clarke's Travels, i. 294, 295.

† Travels in the Ukraine, Vol. iii. p. 171.

which are barren wastes: but enslaved peasants are utterly inconsistent with a flourishing husbandry."*

In *Livonia* estates are of all sizes, and let out on farming leases, as in England. The peasants, though not so much at their ease as in free countries, are yet not enslaved; *they have pieces of land, which some of them cultivate extremely well; and many become opulent.* They have a general appearance of activity among them, and appear to be very industrious.†

In the provinces of Russia proper the peasants are in very different circumstances, according to the lord on whom they depend. *They all have a house and some land furnished by their lord:* but they are compelled to pay to him an *obrok* or fixed rent. On the crown lands, where the obrok is never raised, and the peasants are permitted to enjoy their property, the peasants are in easy circumstances, and are extremely industrious. *The nobles who pursue the same system as Count Sheremetof have very rich and prosperous peasants. On their estates the peasants are exceedingly industrious, and have the same wish for luxuries as other people: and are withal well fed, clothed, and lodged.*‡ On the estates of the greater part of the nobles, however, the people are only permitted to have the necessaries of life: all superfluity is taken from them: and their land is a precarious possession, without the advantages of property, yielding only a present existence. These poor people live, in consequence, in the most dependent and miserable state. Surrounded by riches, they are too often dying of hunger, pining from bad food, or suffering all the misery

* Travels in the Ukraine, Vol. iii. p. 176.

† Marshall's Travels, Vol. iii. p. 229.

‡ Heber's MS. Clarke's Travels, Vol. i. p. 220, 221.

of poverty.* They are reproached with inactivity: but what motive for exertion can they have, when whatever they gain may be seized by a mercenary or rapacious master. Where they are permitted the safe enjoyment of property, no people are more active or industrious.†

VII.—DENMARK.

In DENMARK, the same principles are most fully and satisfactorily exemplified. "There is an essential difference in some tracts from what I observed in others. On most estates, the peasants have no property, but seemed dependent on the will of the lord, and it was manifest in the misery I found in the cottages, that the system of villanage is pernicious to the interests of the country."‡ "On other estates, the system pursued, and effects resulting, are widely different. We rode through several valleys and sides of hills, all cultivated, with great numbers of farm-houses, the inhabitants of which seemed as easy, cheerful, and happy, as if they were resident in England instead of Denmark. This district was formerly extremely poor, but the proprietor changed the system of management, abolished the personal services of the peasantry, and let farms to the industrious and active. § The peasants, in consequence, every day grow into farmers; or at least are all easy and

* Clarke's Travels, Vol. i. p. 221, 223.

† Ibid. Vol. i. p. 170. These statements regarding Russia are confirmed in a very interesting manner by *Raymond*, in his account of the Russian empire; and by referring to the description which he gives of the circumstances of the different districts of this enormous empire, the important consequences of landed property upon the character even of the Russian peasant will be found amply illustrated.

‡ Travels in Denmark, Vol. ii. p. 143, by Marshall.

§ Ibid. Vol. ii. p. 166, 167.

happy in their circumstances. *The labourers have all a small piece of land, and are all contented and happy.* There are scarcely any burdensome to the rest: no old peasant that has not saved enough during his youth to maintain his latter days, with the assistance of his little domain: many before that period have improved their condition, so as to become little farmers. * The example of this prosperous district is sufficient to show, that if you give the people an object to work for, the most idle will be converted to industry. There are no people more naturally indolent than the common people of Denmark; but in the most populous parts of Holland, they are not more active and industrious than the people on this estate, which change has been effected merely by throwing them in the pursuit of gain, and letting them quietly enjoy it." † Throughout all Denmark, where the people have property, they manage their little spots of ground in such a manner, as shows, that under more favourable circumstances, they would equal their neighbours in everything regarding cultivation. ‡

VIII.—ITALY.

From the gloomy forests and eternal plains of Russia and Poland, the traveller turns with enthusiasm to the fields of ITALY, where Nature has poured her choicest gifts; where the riches of vegetation spring unaided by the hand of the husbandman; where the sun of summer shines with unclouded lustre, and the varieties of soil combine with the felicity of exposure, to bring to maturity the finest fruits. In

* Marshall, Vol. ii. p. 186. † Ibid. p. 189. ‡ Ibid. p. 280.

the cradle of liberty, of art, and arms, he hopes to find descendants worthy of their ancient renown; and the people, if not sharing in the glory of their ancestors, at least enjoying some of the blessings which they have purchased for mankind.

Hardly has he emerged from the defiles of the Simplon or the Brenner, when the illusion is dispelled. In the rich and fertile plain of Lombardy, where three crops annually repay the labour of the husbandman, and the means of perpetual irrigation are afforded by the streams that descend from the adjoining mountains, want and indigence generally prevail among the peasantry.* Inhabiting a country which abounds in wine, it is seldom they drink anything but water: their clothing is scanty and wretched; their dwellings destitute of all the comforts of life.† On the public roads, in the villages, in the cities, the traveller is assailed by multitudes of beggars, whose squalid looks and urgent importunity attest but too strongly the abject distress to which they are reduced.‡ On the mountains, equally as the plains, he perceives the traces of a numerous population, and the benignity of the climate clothes the wooded slopes with innumerable villages, whose white walls and elegant spires give a peculiar charm to Italian landscape; but within their walls he finds the well-known features of public misery, and the voice of distress supplicating for relief, in scenes which, at a distance, appear only to teem with human happiness.

The indigence which generally prevails is not surprising, when the political condition of the people is

* Young's Travels, ii. 286. † Ibid.; Chateauvieux, 80.
‡ Kotzebue's Travels.

considered. Throughout the whole of Lombardy, you will look in vain for anything like a gentleman's seat: the proprietors all reside in the numerous towns which are scattered over the plain, and repair to their estates only in order to superintend the collection of their rents. * The land is all let to *middlemen*, who relet their farms to the actual cultivators; and such is the accumulated weight thus heaped upon the farmers, that, in spite of the riches of the soil, they can barely procure the necessaries of life. † The first crop goes to the landlord, and the peasantry are compelled to subsist on the more precarious and uncertain returns of the second harvest. ‡ Generally, the cultivators have a small piece of land, with one or more cows; but this system, which, under a more equitable administration, would be the surest basis of public happiness, is here perverted into a prolific source of misery; for by yielding the people *a subsistence and nothing more*, it gives an improper and uncalled for facility to their increase. § "The division of land," says Chateauvieux, "leads the peasantry to grasp at the least appearance of a maintenance, to marry, without in the least reflecting how they are to maintain a family:" ‖ population advances with rapidity, in consequence of *the ignorance, the absence of foresight, and the total absence of artificial wants among the people.* ¶

The same oppressive and ruinous system of middlemen is conspicuous in the states of Parma and Modena, and the district of Padua; and in them all

* Young's Travels, ii. 151; and personal observation.
† Ibid. 155; Chateauvieux, 184. ‡ Ibid. 80.
§ Young, ii. 286. ‖ Chateauvieux, 80, 184. ¶ Young, ii. 286.

the same depression of the peasantry is to be seen.* Generally, the exactions from the cultivators are such, that they are totally unable either to do justice to the soil, or stock the farm, and the proprietor is obliged to furnish the cattle, half the seed, and pay the taxes; a complete proof of the length to which the oppression of the labouring classes has been carried.† Little, however, is required to improve the condition of these people. "The Italians," says Eustace, "are a very laborious people; and if they do not enjoy the blessings attached by Providence to industry, the fault does not lie with them, but *in the system by which they are governed.* It is impossible to witness the exertions of the peasantry on the rocky banks of the Lago, Lugano, or Como, where olives are planted in the clefts of rocks, and vines are trained round the base of the chestnut trees, without perceiving to what prosperity they would arrive, if they were permitted to enjoy the fruits of their toil." ‡

Emigration, so great a relief to the surplus population of other states, rarely is attempted by the Italians. Accustomed from their infancy to a delicious climate and genial soil; inhabiting a country where the very air they breathe seems filled with taste, and where the sense of its enjoyment has descended even to the labouring classes, the Italians feel the desolation of exiles amidst the harsh dialects and discordant manners of foreign states. In Venice, where the channels of industry are entirely obstructed, and nearly fifty thousand persons are computed to live by charity, § the people suffer, and their numbers decline;

* Young, ii. 155, 158. † Ibid. ‡ Eustace, i. 207. § Ibid.

but very few attempt to better their condition, by leaving the standard of St Mark.

The aspect of the people is still more melancholy in the *ecclesiastical states*, where, in addition to the disadvantages of great proprietors, middlemen, and indigent cultivators, are to be found all the evils of an elective monarchy, and the want, in a large proportion of the country, of hereditary descent. The peasantry are for the most part utterly destitute of capital; they in general furnish the cattle and implements of husbandry, and the proprietor the repairs, and the produce is equally divided between them.* No improvement of any sort can be expected from a great proportion of the landholders, who, being ecclesiastics who succeed to their benefices late in life, have no permanent interest in the soil, and think only of turning it to the best advantage during the short and precarious period of their possession.† Yet they have the absolute government of the country, both as legislators and proprietors; their overgrown estates are cultivated by the lazy hands of hopeless and indigent vassals; and the scanty harvests are confined or exported for the benefit of a monopoly.‡ It is to this cause that the sterility of the Campania is to be ascribed. Originally introduced by the feuds of the nobility in the middle ages,§ it has been perpetuated by the indolence and want of spirit in succeeding proprietors;‖ until at length its poisonous air has reached the *eternal city*, and threatens with desolation those venerable remains, which the arms of the barbarians were unable to destroy.

It is a common observation, that the farther south

* Young, ii. 155. † Gibbon, xii. 429. ‡ Ibid.
§ Sismondi, iii. 274. ‖ Ibid. xvi. 294.

you travel in Italy, the more debased do you find the character, and the more degraded the condition of the inhabitants. The remark is unfortunately too true of the Neapolitan peasantry. Throughout the whole country, both in Naples and Sicily, the condition of the people is extremely indigent.* The wages of labour are ruinously low, hardly amounting to 4d. a day, at Naples, and in the interior of the country seldom to half that sum; and the cottagers live on chesnuts, or other casual and unsubstantial nutriment, instead of the rich and wholesome diet which the country affords.† Dark and melancholy countenances, miserable apparel, and dilapidated huts, indicate the general indigence which prevails.‡ Ignorance is universal, the people have no guide but the practice of their forefathers.§ The usual rotation in arable districts is corn and fallow, for the poverty of the country affords no sale for the produce of pasture or artificial grasses: whatever the country produces is owing to the mildness of the climate or the goodness of the soil, but hardly anything to the industry or skill of the inhabitants.‖

The misery of the country is noways surprising when the numerous and vexatious oppressions to which they are subjected is considered. The fruits of the soil are usually divided between the proprietor and cultivator: but the total want of any market for the produce of pasture lands, fixes the whole attention of the cultivators on the arable districts.¶ Almost all the land is in the hands of great families, the successors of the Norman barons who conquered the country, and the powers with which they are invested over

* Swinburne, i. 74. † Ibid. 76. ‡ De Salis, 289. § Ibid. 76, 411.
‖ De Salis, 76. ¶ Swinburne.

their vassals are in the highest degree ruinous.* They have the power of life and death: they are entitled to one-tenth of all the produce raised within their lordship, besides the rent to the actual proprietor: they have an exclusive right to carry on the most profitable branches of industry,—baking, grinding, selling butcher-meat, keeping an inn, making oil,—and these monopolies are let by auction to the highest bidder.† The exercise of these powers is severe enough by the actual proprietors; but in the hands of unfeeling stewards or bailiffs, they become absolutely intolerable.‡ It is with the utmost difficulty that the peasantry are able to pay the numerous exactions to which they are subjected, and redress is impossible, except at the cost of a litigation, which is wholly beyond their reach.§ Many estates have from these causes been totally depopulated. On the royal lands the ruinous system of middlemen generally prevails, and leases till a very recent period were only annual.‖

The roads throughout the kingdom are for the most part wretched.¶ In vain are the valleys fruitful, and their hills sunny; the husbandman can find no vent for the luxuriant harvests which nature has yielded to his labour.** In seasons of scarcity it is forcibly seized by orders of the sovereign, and the owners driven to market like cattle by armed men, laden with their own property.††

The exactions proceeding directly from the royal authority are not less severe. In the foremost rank of these intolerable grievances stands the monopoly of the *Manna*. All manna belongs by law to the king, who farms it out to a certain set of contractors.

* De Salis, 197. † Ibid. 199. ‡ Ibid. 202. § Ibid.
‖ Ibid. 224. ¶ Ibid. 29. ** Ibid. 289. †† Swinburne, i. 234.

To gather it, a certain number of peasants is furnished by the feudatory; and during the time they are engaged in this duty, which is generally a month, they are not allowed to do anything for the preservation of their little harvests. * The peasants are punished with the utmost severity if they are detected secreting the smallest portion of this royal produce; and the constant searches for it in their houses are a continual source of vexation. † Everything is excised, and the revenue farmed out to contractors. All live animals in Calabria are taxed, and the people in consequence keep no animal of any kind, and live on the most miserable food.‡ Improvements are never attempted, for they require far larger capital than the peasantry possess; and bitter experience has taught them that increased activity or produce is only the signal for an additional weight of taxes. § Numbers every year are driven to desperation by these oppressions: they then assemble in bands in the mountains, and form those lawless banditti so well known to travellers in the south of Italy. ‖

The population of Naples, though redundant and miserable, is yet greatly less than might be maintained in comfort under a better government. It contains 4,800,000 souls, which is about 160 to the square mile; a miserable number for a climate in which profitable cultivation can be carried almost to the mountain tops. In the *Terra di Lavoro*, the proportion is perhaps as great as the soil could maintain, for it is above 560 to the square mile; but generally over the country it is greatly less than might be supported, or than actually existed in ancient times.¶

* Swinburne, ii. 74. † Ibid. 88, 92. ‡ Ibid. ii. 124. § Ibid. 197.
‖ Ibid. i. 213. ¶ De Salis, 84, 56, 133. Chateauvieux, 215.

In some places the condition of the people is essentially different, and demonstrates that the general distress is not owing to any necessary operation of the principle of increase, but to the iniquitous government to which they are subjected. "With pleasure," says M. De Salis, "I call to mind several districts, where every countenance displayed the signs of contentment: where agriculture was upon the very best footing, and various manufactures had attained the highest perfection. But these proprietors were men who administered justice in the most impartial manner, and seldom made use of their baronial powers. It is difficult to describe the difference between such estates and those which are subject to a different management, or in the hands of the royal stewards."* During the administration of the Prince of Francavalla, the people on his estates doubled, agriculture was encouraged, villages built, schools opened, manufactures set on foot, universal prosperity prevailed; since they have fallen to the Crown, the population has decreased one-third, the newly cultivated lands are waste, the manufactories annihilated, and general distress has resumed its sway.† The town of Terlozzi has purchased its freedom from the baronial powers for L.16,000: and on its territory the people are industrious, comfortable, and numerous.‡ The same has been done by the town of Osia, and its lands are cultivated like a garden: but the prosperity and cheerfulness which distinguish its people, cease the moment you enter the baronial estates by which it is surrounded.§

From the indigence and misery of the Neapolitan population, the traveller turns with delight to the

* De Salis, 200. † Ibid. 207. ‡ Ibid. 231. § Ibid. 129.

vine-covered hills and valleys of *Tuscany*, where, under the gentle sway of a more equitable government, prosperity has been diffused more generally through the people. In the valley of the Arno, the condition of the people is in the highest degree comfortable; their dwellings neat and clean, their food substantial, their dress elegant, and even ornamental.* Silk dresses, adorned with gold and silver ornaments, form the gay apparel of the females on Sundays, especially in those districts where the manufacture of straw hats is carried on, which forms a very great addition to the earnings of a family.† Property is extremely subdivided in the greater part of the country, and it is the families *of those little proprietors who are in so comfortable a condition.*‡ The industry with which they cultivate their little estates, often in terraces along the face of rocky slopes, and the skill with which they take advantage of every level spot to rear crops of vegetables and fruit, are in the highest degree admirable.§ But the condition of the *metayers*, by whom a great part of the country is cultivated, is very different. Wherever the land is let in this way the peasantry are in a depressed condition. The landlord is bound to furnish the tenant with half the stocking; but he is frequently in addition obliged to lend him money to purchase his half, and often even corn whereon to subsist;‖ and their food is frequently nothing but black bread and vetches, with a little weak wine and water. Throughout all Italy you will look in vain for an opulent tenantry, such as distinguishes England from every other country on the globe.¶

* Chateauvieux, 79. Young, ii. 156.
† Chateauvieux, 81, 87.
‡ Ibid. p. 93, 94, and Simond, 123.
§ Chateauvieux, p. 84.
‖ Young, ii. 156.
¶ Ibid. ii. 165.

The vigour of a free government in former times, and the animating influence of a division of landed property, are eminently conspicuous in the territory of *Genoa*. On the southern slope of the Apennines, amidst olive groves and chestnut forests, the industry of the inhabitants is truly admirable; and notwithstanding the decay of their foreign commerce, and the political revolutions which have subverted their freedom, the condition of the people is still greatly superior to that of most other parts of Italy.*

Notwithstanding its great population, amounting to 16,560,000 in the whole peninsula, or 134 in the square mile, Italy might still maintain a much greater number of inhabitants in ease and comfort under a free government.† The Campagna of Rome, once inhabited by many millions, is now a desert waste, and the plains of Latium, once the abode of thirty different tribes,‡ are now traversed only by buffaloes, or abandoned to the encroachments of a pestilential air. It is hardly possible to estimate the capacities of a country where the plains yield double and triple crops, the hills an inexhaustible supply of wine and oil, the mountains a permanent provision from their chestnut forests, and the highest summits a range of the finest and coolest pasturage.§ Under one government, and if blessed with a moderate degree of freedom and intelligence, Italy might support double its present inhabitants, and yet allow to each a much greater quantity of the comforts of life than they actually enjoy. It is with mingled sentiments of pride and gratitude, that a native of this country should return from traversing the Italian states; with

* Simond, p. 586. † Malte Brun, vii. 754. ‡ Eustace, ii. 127.
§ Chateauvieux, 12—57.

pride that he is the member of a community, in which the energy of the people has reared a constitution which has "shed over our northern isle a splendour unknown to the regions of the sun;" and with gratitude, that public happiness is not the peculiar growth of any climate; but under all circumstances, and in all ages, is to be won by the vigour of a free people.

IX.—Spain and Portugal.

Over the greater part of the Spanish Peninsula, the condition of the people but ill corresponds to the bounty and luxuriance of Nature. Universally, there is a total want of those conveniences and comforts which are usually to be found in civilized states; an entire ignorance of the mechanical arts, and a degree of rudeness in their implements of husbandry which is truly astonishing.* The villages are frequently in ruins, and the inhabitants have all the appearance of indigence, though they in general have no want of the necessaries of life. The cultivators of Spain amount to 1,900,000; the artisans to 310,000; a striking proof of the small demand for articles of luxury, and consequent absence of artificial wants among the people.† Throughout all the realm there is a total want of yeomanry, or a substantial tenantry, the cultivators being little better than day-labourers.‡ Landed proprietors never reside upon their estates, but entirely in the great towns; the great nobles at Madrid, the inferior proprietors in the capitals of the provinces.§ Almost all the farms are too large: cultivation is generally not attempted

* Jovellanos, 263. † Townsend, ii. 106. ‡ Ibid. ii. 228.
§ Townsend, i. 233.

on the half of it, and large quantities of arable land everywhere lie in a state of Nature. *

That listless indolence, which is equally characteristic of the savage state, as of the inhabitants of despotic states, prevails to the greatest degree in Spain. Thousands of men in all the provinces spend their time, day after day, in lounging under porticos, or basking in the sun. † Naturally abstemious, their scanty fare is easily procured: blessed with a warm climate, their clothing is hardly an object of expense. ‡ This, however, is not the natural tendency of the national character, which is a love of activity and laborious exertion. If they are idle, it is because they have no object whereon to exert their industry. § In Catalonia, Valencia, and the Asturias, where the peasantry have generally property of their own, their industry is eminently conspicuous. ‖

Everything conspires to indicate that Spain once contained a much greater population than that which at present inhabits it. "Abundant vestiges of this ancient population are to be seen in all parts of the country. The heights are crowned with castles and mansions in ruins; and dilapidated churches or chapels are everywhere to be seen in the midst of profound solitudes, where, for a long period, not a single inhabitant has been seen. These sacred structures all belonged at one period to villages and hamlets, of which every trace has long ago perished. Their number is in many parts of the country altogether

* Jovellanos, p. 93. † Swinburne, ii. 190. ‡ Ibid.
§ Townsend, ii. 233.
‖ Ibid. i. 103; iii. 317, 397; Fisher, 327; Swinburne, ii. 319.

astonishing. * Eleven hundred of these ruined villages are to be found in the kingdoms of Arragon, Catalonia, Leon, Valencia, Old and New Castile, alone.† A part of the kingdom of Salamanca formerly comprised 748 villages; of these only 333 remain. In a part of the bishopric of Salamanca, 127 villages formerly existed in the space of 5 leagues; 13 only remain: in the district of Malaga, to the west of that city, were 50 villages; of these only 16 remain. ‡

But the most deplorable decrease in the numbers of the people is to be found in the provinces which formerly composed the kingdom of the Moors. The kingdom of Grenada, under the Moors, comprised 3,000,000 of inhabitants; its present numbers do not exceed 661,000.§ Under the Caliphs, 12,000 villages enlivened the banks of the Guadalquiva: the sovereign gave laws to 80 cities of the first, and 300 of the second and third order; and a traveller could not advance an hour without coming to a village or a town filled with numerous inhabitants. ‖ At present, not one-third of the province of Andalusia is under cultivation; and though its soil is so rich, it annually imports grain to a large amount. ¶ The revenues of the Moorish kingdom, which did not comprehend more than the south and east of Spain, was L. 5,000,000 Sterling; a sum not far short of the revenue of the whole Spanish monarchy at this day, notwithstanding the vast alteration in the value of the precious metals, which the discovery of South America has occasioned.

* Laborde, iv. 10. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. iv. 11.

‖ Gibbon's Rome, v. 381, 4th edition; Swinburne, 254; Florian, Discours Preliminaire, à Gonzalve de Cordove, p. 37.

¶ Townsend's Spain, ii. 285, 392.

What makes this unparalleled depopulation of Spain the more extraordinary is, that the country is everywhere of the greatest fertility, requiring only a little capital and industry to make it capable of maintaining five times its present number of inhabitants. * Its population has doubtless received many severe wounds, both from the devastation of the Vandal conquerors, the ravages of the Moors, the long and bloody wars, which, for so many centuries, were carried on between them and the Spaniards, and the loss of the multitudes of industrious subjects which the expulsion of the Moors occasioned. But other countries of Europe have at different periods suffered as great losses; in which, nevertheless, the principle of increase has repaired all the devastations, and overspread the land with the descendants of those who had been fortunate enough to escape the ravages that surrounded them. There has been something peculiar, therefore, in the Spanish peninsula, which has prevented the *vis medicatrix Naturæ* from healing here, as in other countries, the wounds which have been inflicted by the events of former times.

The real cause of the scanty population of Spain, as well as of the indigence of the labouring classes, is to be found in the oppression of the nobles and the despotic nature of the government. "No country," says Mr Townsend, "ever invented a more ruinous system of taxation. The *Alcavala* with its *Cientos* is a tax of 14 per cent. on commodities, as often as they pass from hand to hand. This is of itself sufficient to induce stagnation, for the tax varies with the present value of the article.† It affects heritable as

* Laborde, iv. 34. † Townsend's Spain, Vol. ii.

well as movable property, and operates with the most grievous force upon the possessors of small freeholds which frequently pass from hand to hand.* The manufacturers and merchants are exposed to innumerable vexations on this account; the more especially as the revenue was all let to farmers, who placed spies in every shop, and were authorized to examine tradesmen's books.† So great was the rapacity of the tax farmers in former times, that, in the villages, not one-third of the houses had escaped their exactions, who, when nothing else remained to the miserable possessors, sold the materials to the first purchaser. This great evil was not removed till 1749.‡ The magistrate, at that period, fixed the price of every article, corn itself not excluded; and it was not till the year 1752, that the exportation of grain from province to province was permitted.§ Till the year 1765, the exportation of grain was prohibited; dealers and jobbers in cattle were discouraged, from the idea that they tended to enhance the price of the article; and all horses must still be registered. On this account the farmer is subjected to strict and unreasonable visits of revenue-officers, and has, moreover, his market greatly circumscribed on that account.‖

The *Millones* is a tax not less destructive in its effects than the *Alcavala*. It is a tax of one-seventh on many of the most important necessaries of life, such as wine, oil, and butcher's meat: and, consequently, it falls with peculiar severity on the labouring classes, whose food consists in great part of these

* Jovellanos, 248.

† Campomanes, Educ. Popul. p. 224, Ap. 4. ‡ Ibid. Ap. 1, p. 347.

§ Ibid. i. 418. Townsend, ii. 221. ‖ Townsend, ii, 222, 223.

articles.* "These taxes, the *Alcavala* and the *Millones*," says Jovellanos, "seize the productions of the soil the instant they appear: pursue and fasten on them in their circulation, without losing sight, and without losing hold of them till the last moment of their consumption:—a circumstance which of itself justifies the terms with which this mode of taxation has been branded by Favala, Ustariz, Alva, and all our economists who have turned their attention to this subject."†

These grievous taxes are not universal in Spain: they do not affect Catalonia, Valencia, Arragon, Navarre, nor the three provinces of Biscay,‡ in which Philip V. exchanged them for an equivalent; and the benefit of this exemption is apparent in the superior wealth, comfort, and industry of these provinces.§—while Castile and the other provinces evidently stagnate under the load which they impose.‖

The laws of the *Mesta* are another great source of the indigence and backwardness of Spain. Five millions of sheep, under the sanction of a particular code, not only fail to enrich the land on which they feed, but effectually prevent its cultivation.¶ For the company of the *Mesta*, being possessed of great influence, have obtained, and still exercise, the most enormous and shameful privileges.** A particular tribunal exists, called "The Honourable Council of the *Mesta*," which superintends the preservation of these immunities. The proprietors, and even the shepherds possess a power of committing, which they frequently abuse;†† and the judges of the Mesta court settle every

* Jovellanos, 249. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. 251.
§ Campomanes, Educ. Pop. i. 418. ‖ Townsend, ii. 244.
¶ Townsend, ii. 227. ** Jovellanos, 166. †† Laborde, iv. 58.

dispute in which the Mesta is anywise concerned. The cultivated lands which lie near the route which the flocks take, suffer the greatest depredations; but it is in vain that they solicit redress from this court, whose decisions are almost invariably in favour of its own servants.* Nor are the common lands less devastated by the immense flocks which traverse them; but they too are obliged to submit in silence. Wherever they pass, the directors and shepherds are dreaded, for they exercise a most insufferable despotism in consequence of this privilege of bringing those whom they insult before their own tribunal. Five millions of sheep annually migrating in this manner, not only convert an immense tract of highly valuable land into pasturage, but prevent any agricultural produce being ever raised upon it.† Public opinion has long been decided in Spain against these exorbitant privileges; but though a committee was appointed in the middle of the last century to inquire into these grievances, they have done nothing for thirty or forty years, so that affairs remain just in the same state.‡

Perhaps, however, the greatest evil in Spain is the way in which large estates are engrossed by a few individuals, who have neither the means nor the inclination to do any thing for their improvement, and who are shamefully inattentive to the condition of their tenantry. Almost the whole of Andalusia is in the hands of the Dukes of Osuna, Alba, and Medina Coeli; and the latter claims by descent nearly all Catalonia.§ A *third part* of all Spain is held by the families of Medina Coeli, Alba, Infantado, and

* Laborde, iv. 60. † Ibid. iv. 59. ‡ Ibid. iv. 61.
§ Townsend, ii. 228.

some other grandees, the archbishops of Toledo, Compostella, Valencia, Seville, Murcia, &c. and a few of the religious orders.* *The nobles and the clergy possess nearly the whole country;* and the major part of the lands belonging to these great proprietors is under grass.† What is still worse, the land-owners do not overlook their servants, but live in cities, leaving their estates to the management of stewards, who do nothing to encourage the people, and thus the few villages which are inhabited are rapidly hastening to decay.‡

The great possessions of towns is another evil of no light kind in Spain. These boroughs have in many places most extensive landed estates, often ten or fifteen miles in diameter. These tracts are common property, and of course nothing is done to improve them.§ They arose during the wars of the Moors and Christians, when the peasants of the country were compelled to herd together into towns for their mutual protection. The consequence of this has been, that in the south of Spain, where these wars principally prevailed, independent farms, detached from each other, are hardly ever to be seen. Near the village you see grain, olives, and vines; beyond this all is desolate.‖ A foreigner would hardly credit the extent of land which is necessarily waste by being kept in a state of commonty throughout the middle and southern provinces of Spain; an evil which has been long felt, but for which no remedy has yet been devised.¶ And universally it has been observed, that whatever part of the country contains the greatest quantity of commonable lands is the *least populous;*

* Laborde, iv. 20. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. iv. 21; Townsend, ii. 231.
§ Townsend, ii. 228; Jovellanos, 129. ‖ Ibid. ¶ Jovellanos, 129.

and to this cause is to be ascribed the fatal precipitation with which the labours of the field are performed in the large farms of these provinces.* This single fact is sufficient to explain the small population of the south of Spain where these commons are frequent, when compared with the north, where they are comparatively rare.†

So strongly have the evils arising from this monopoly of the land in the hands of great proprietors, ecclesiastical bodies, boroughs, or commonties been felt in Spain, that their wisest patriots, with Campomanes at their head, have long been labouring to pass a law, by which any man may be allowed *to cultivate what waste land he pleases without the proprietor's consent, and enjoy it as a copyhold, subject to a certain rent to that proprietor.*‡ The advantages which would result from such a measure are incalculable; for it would rear a *yeomanry* and an opulent and industrious body of *tenantry*, which are precisely the class of men of whom Spain most stands in need: but the feudal lords, blind to their own interest, have had influence enough to prevent its being adopted.§

To complete the evils arising from this unjust monopoly of land, the system of *entails* and *mortmain tenure*, which prevails to a greater extent in Spain than in any other country of the world, locks up the land of the chief proprietors in the hands of its present possessors; and not only prevents either capital or industry from being exerted on the estates which are subject to these fetters, but raises the price of the whole land in the country to a most exorbitant

* Jovellanos, 129. † Ibid. 131. ‡ Townsend's Travels, ii. 231.
§ Townsend's Travels, ii. 231. Jovellanos, 130, 131.

and ruinous height. This scarcity of disposable estates, in consequence of the quantity of land held under entail, or by mortmain tenure in Spain, is uinversally allowed to be the cause of the enormous price which it bears.* The consequence of this exorbitant price has been, that rich proprietors avoid so unprofitable a speculation as the cultivation or purchase of land, and leave it to the present tenantry, who possess nothing but their spade and their arm,† or pasture it merely with sheep flocks, without ever attempting any serious improvement.‡ It has been observed by Campomanes, that Andalusia, though one of the most fertile provinces in Spain, is destitute of industry: because the land is occupied by a few proprietors whose estates pass by entail. The bulk of the people are day-labourers, who only find occasional employment. Hence, clothed in rags and wretchedness, they crowd into cities, where they obtain a scanty livelihood by the bounty of ecclesiastics.§

This distinguished patriot has devoted a separate work to discuss the monstrous evils arising from the accumulation of land under mortmain tenure in Spain. "Nearly *the whole of Gallicia*," he observes, "is appropriated to corporations, monasteries, churches, fraternities, Dukes, Earls, Marquises and nobles belonging to this and other provinces."‖ "The laws," says Jovellanos, "have granted indefinite permission to *increase* mortmain on entailed property: but have absolutely prohibited their *diminution:* and thus con-

* Jovellanos, 181. Townsend, iii. 333. † Ibid. 184.

‡ Townsend's Travels, ii. 228.

§ Campomanes, Induct. Pop. 73. Townsend's Spain, iii. 333.

‖ Campomanes on the Rights of the Crown over Mortmain Property, 1765.

stituted an endless monopoly, an increasing abyss, which, ere long, if continued, will engulf the wealth of the kingdom."*

We can form no conception of the evils arising from such entails in this country, where estates so held are generally the residence of the proprietor, and benefited by the expenditure of most of the wealth which he draws from the people: but in Spain, the owners of the entailed estates reside in cities or at court, without either visiting or bestowing one thought upon their vast and indigent possessions in the country.† They are uniformly overrun by servants, and generally deeply in debt, so that, even if they had the inclination, they have not the means of improving their properties, which are so extensive, that, under a better system, they would yield a revenue worthy of sovereigns.‡

It has been observed by Mr Smith, that the act 1449, which secures the tenantry against the death or the sale of the lessor, has been of more practical benefit to the Scotch people than all the rest of their laws put together.§ In Spain, on the other hand, the ruinous maxim of the civil law has obtained *resoluto jure dantis, resolvitur jus accipientis*; and this has checked both the progress of wealth towards farming, and the exertions of the cultivators, by the precarious nature of the tenure by which they held their possessions.‖

Education is not awanting in many parts of Spain; but it is productive of no benefit, because nothing is

* Jovellanos, 180. † Laborde, iv. 318, &c.
‡ Townsend's Travels, ii. 159.
§ Wealth of Nations. ‖ Jovellanos, 201.

taught which is worth learning. "What a deplorable negligence," says Jovellanos, "does there appear in our system of public education: it actually appears that we have endeavoured as earnestly to diminish useful instruction, as to multiply institutions for the attainment of unprofitable science.*" It is owing to this cause, that, while institutions for education and parochial schools exist in great numbers,† there is no country in the world in which the people are in such utter ignorance, not only of any profitable information, but of the sacred Scriptures, or any really useful moral instruction.‡

Such, in a few words, is a sketch of some of the most prominent evils which have depressed the prosperity, and thinned the numbers of the Spanish people: and when their accumulated force is considered, the only wonderful thing is, that the country is not more desolate and depopulated than it actually is.

The picture which has now been exhibited of the Spanish population, though true of the greater part, does not apply to *all* the provinces. There are some where a different order of things has long been established: where property has diffused its blessings among the poor; where liberty has animated the feelings, and awakened the industry of the labouring classes; and where the principle of population produces none of the deplorable effects with which it is followed under the despotic sway of the other provinces. In particular, Catalonia has long been distinguished by the industry, the activity, and the independent spirit of its inhabitants. They are freed, in common with the Valencians and the Bis-

* Jovellanos, 266. † Laborde, iv. 38. ‡ Jovellanos, 266.

cayans, from the stagnating influence of the Alcavala, Cientos, and Millones.* But the great cause of the superiority of their industry and comfort is the establishment of feus or Emphyteutic contracts, which here takes place to a considerable extent, and which, wherever it is practised, has broken down the landed property among the labouring classes of the people.† The consequence of this has been, that wherever this system is established, the most remarkable degree of industry prevails;‡ wherever the vine can fix its roots, or the plough can go over, the land is made productive.§ But the extent of this prosperous scene is precisely commensurate with the extent of the lands where feuing is carried into practice. *Every parish that will till or feu at a moderate price is sure to be cultivated;* but the great lord who will never sell any, is equally sure of perpetuating deserts to the disgrace of the country.‖ The only capital which is applied to the cultivation of the soil in Catalonia, proceeds from the savings of the poor labourers:¶ who, throughout the whole province, *are remarkable for the most rigid parsimony,*** and who are stimulated to these frugal habits *by the prospect of being able to realize their savings in the purchase or feuing of lands:*†† an employment which in that country offers the only comfortable dependence for the father of a family.‡‡ Whenever cultivation creeps up the mountain sides, it is conducted by these small cultivators who have pur-

* Townsend, iii. 327. Campomanes, Industria Popul. 72, 224.
† Campomanes, Ind. Pop. 73. ‡ Townsend, i. 103.
§ Ibid. iii. 317. ‖ Swinburne, ii. 319. ¶ Ibid.
** Townsend, i. 145. †† Swinburne, ii. 319. ‡‡ Ibid.

chased their lands from the parish: all that has been done in Catalonia has originated from this source.*

But as the industry and improvement of Catalonia begin with those peasants who have acquired their farms in property from the great proprietors; so it ends with those who refuse to permit this sub-infeudation. Many of the great nobility are so utterly inattentive to their real interests, as to prohibit feuing, and leave their lands uncultivated; † and it is to this cause that we are to ascribe the number of wastes in Catalonia, and the multitudes of deserted villages which even in this industrious province amount to 288.‡ In a country where the farmers are absolutely destitute of capital, and where there is no such thing to be seen as a gentleman residing on his estate,§ it is easy to see that cultivation can make no progress where the labourer is not possessed in property of the soil which he improves. Hence, though the people are proverbial for their industry, they are almost everywhere indigent, ‖ and perhaps not one acre in ten is under any sort of husbandry.¶ And though the country is particularly adapted for grazing, the farmers are almost totally deficient in cattle.** Yet nowhere is there any want of industry: these defects in the cultivation are owing to the government, and the inattention of the nobles; and everything indicates that it is not the fault of the poor people that greater exertions are not made.††

The Catalonians have at all times been passionate-

* Swinburne, ii. 319. Young's Travels, ii. 318.
† Townsend, iii. 333. Jovellanos, passim. ‡ Jovellanos, 264.
§ Swinburne, ii. 317, 318. ‖ Young's Travels, ii. 318.
¶ Swinburne. Ibid. 317, 318, Vol. ii.
** Ibid. and Young, ii. 318. †† Young, ii. 318.

ly fond of liberty;* and though their privileges have been almost destroyed by the last insurrection; yet its effects still stimulate the people in their private efforts: and in the industry for which the province is deservedly celebrated, we may discern the effects of the free spirit of former times.† And in general it may be observed, that, although the Catalonians are poor, yet they are decidedly superior in comfort as well as activity to the inhabitants of most of the other Spanish provinces.‡

It has been already observed, that *Valencia* is free from the oppressive taxes§ which desolate the greater part of the Spanish monarchy. This fortunate circumstance, joined to the extreme fertility of the soil, and the absence of great proprietors, has induced the admirable cultivation and the happy appearance of this province.‖ The unaffected manners, the neatness and comfortable appearance of the inhabitants, form a striking contrast to their condition in most of the other provinces:¶ the handsome forms of the men, and the beauty of the women, afford a sure criterion of their superior well-being.** Forges and cartwrights, unknown in most other provinces, are here common:†† the people are more neatly dressed: everything indicates more life and gaiety—and proves in the clearest manner, that there is nothing in the character of the Spaniards which is hostile to industry, when they are put in the right road, and meet with any kind of encouragement.‡‡

* Swinburne, ii. 194. Fisher, 365. † Ibid.
‡ Marshall's Travels, iv. 380. Laborde, iii. 234.
§ Jovellanos, 251. ‖ Laborde, ii. p. 242. ¶ Fisher, 327.
** Fisher, 335, 327. †† Ibid. ‡‡ Marshall's Travels, iv. 371.

But it is only in *Biscay*, that the example is to be found of a population completely happy under the sway of the Spanish monarchy. "Everything in Biscay," says Mr Swinburne, "wears a different aspect from what the traveller is accustomed to elsewhere in Spain. Instead of the bare, depopulated hills, the melancholy desponding countenances, the wretched inns, and the abominable roads, that our eyes had long been accustomed to, we were here revived by the sight of a rich, studied culture, a clean, smiling people, good furniture, neat houses, fine roads, and safe bridges. The men and women were extremely well-dressed, especially the latter, whose garb is neat and pastoral: on Sunday they wear white. I cannot find words to express the wonderful fertility, the crowds of villages, the noble woods, and the happy, busy looks of the crowd returning from market. Every cottage has its little garden, neat and flourishing: the little towns are full of good houses, built by those whose industry and enterprise have been rewarded with success."* "The cultivation is quite superb; it is almost incredible with what industry the mountain sides are cultivated;† but all this ceases when you pass the limits of the province. In place of the ease, the comfort, and the opulence of the Biscayans, you see nothing but indigence, listlessness, and dejection."‡

The province of Biscay, though under the Spanish government, is, properly speaking, only under the protection of the Spanish Crown. It is a kind of political anomaly: being a small republic united to a great monarchy.§ The Spanish kings have here only

* Swinburne, i. 276.
† Fisher, 114. Townsend, i. 397.
‡ Fisher, 115. Laborde.
§ Fisher, 86.

the shadow of domination: of all the royal taxes they have none, but the donativo, or gratuitous donation. Biscay is governed by itself; and does not permit any order of the Spanish government to be executed without the sanction of the states of the province.* The King is styled only Lord of Biscay, and the privileges of the people are most extensive, and preserved with a jealous care.† The highest nobles, and the lowest proprietor are, in point of rank, equal in this happy province: but the local government is in the hands of the latter, and is annually renewed by the majority of the provinces."‡ On a smaller scale the little district of *Daroca* exhibits the same delightful spectacle of general happiness, in the midst of the gloom of the surrounding provinces.§

The population of Spain is only 67 to a mile: whereas in France it is 157, and in Holland, 272. It is easy to perceive, from the small numbers of the people, joined to their excessive poverty, what an invincible obstacle the nature of the government and the privileges of the higher orders have opposed to the multiplication of the people.

The same causes which have desolated the fields of Spain, have produced the same effects upon the people of Portugal.‖ In the rich and fertile province of *Alenteijo*, the privileges belonging to the flocks of the nobles, equal those of the mesta in Spain, and are attended with the same ruinous effects.¶ The same evils, arising from the enormous size of estates, and the prevalence of entails, have been experienced;** to

* Fisher, 86. † Swinburne, i. 276. ‡ Fisher, 86.
§ Laborde. ‖ Link's Portugal, 160.
¶ Silviera, 125. ** Link, 125. Silviera, 132.

which the prevalence of estates held in joint tenancy is to be added, which are generally covered with heath.* The principal obstacle to the progress of agriculture, however, is the extreme badness of the roads, which render the riches of nature wholly unavailing both to their possessors and the state. †

The only province in Portugal that exhibits an agreeable spectacle is that of Minho, which contains no less than 900,000 souls, though the whole country consists of ridges of granite mountains intersected with precipitous vales.‡ But the industry of the inhabitants is most conspicuous: the steep acclivities of the hills are cut into terraces and planted with maize, while the slopes are covered with vines, and yield the finest fruits.§ The fare of the peasantry is substantial. Ham, milk, cheese, and butter are to be got in abundance; their furniture clean and comfortable; their general condition such as would be envied by many an English peasant. Great estates are *very rare* in the province; the whole country, with the exception of the property belonging to monasteries, is *in the hands of the actual cultivators, which is the real cause of the prosperity of the province.*‖

Spain and Portugal are full of interesting information to the political economist. The extremes of misery and comfort are there to be seen: the worst political institutions, by the side of the fairest specimens of public felicity. In the provinces where the numbers of the people are most scanty, the indigence that prevails is the greatest; while in those where industry and property have been suffered to establish

* Link, 125. Silviera. † Ibid. 163. ‡ Link, 333.
§ Silviera, 72. Link, 351. ‖ Link, 333. Silviera, 34, p. 84.

themselves, vast numbers are maintained in comfort and affluence. Like every other country, the Spanish peninsula demonstrates, that the suffering which prevails is not owing to any necessary operation of the principle of increase; but to those causes which prevent the growth of those habits of industry, and that acquisition of comfort, which provides at once for its expansion and control.

X.—GERMANY.

Throughout the wide extent of the GERMAN EMPIRE the condition of the people is as various as the aspect and capabilities of the country. All the varieties of political circumstances are there to be found in close proximity; and the traveller has the means of comparing during a single day's journey the opposite effects of freedom and oppression upon mankind.

Throughout the provinces of *Upper and Lower Austria* the circumstances of the people are easy and comfortable.* Everything wears a favourable aspect: the farmers' houses, their dress, their implements of agriculture, exhibit a striking contrast to those in the adjoining provinces.† The banks of the Danube are thickly studded with excellent villages and cottages: there are no marks of that painful contrast between wealth and poverty which Bohemia or Hungary exhibit: the inhabitants all enjoy that happy mediocrity which is the result of a gentle administration.‡ In many places the peasants dwell in substantial stone houses, and eat meat every day:§ their cattle, horses, and labourers are all in excellent condition;

* Reisbeck, i. 205. Personal observation.

† Austria as it is, p. 72. Reisbeck i. 205. ‡ Ibid. ii. 71. § Ibid.

in few places in the world is there a greater diffusion of physical enjoyments.*

The comfortable condition of the Austrian people is owing partly to the lenity of the government, which has always ruled with a gentle sway in the hereditary dominions of the monarchy, and partly to the peculiar constitution of the tenure by which the land is held. The land is *all held by the peasants in feus* or *perpetual leases*, for payment of a certain fixed annual rent. Thus the whole cultivators are in reality *proprietors*, and enjoy all the advantages of their own industry.† The rental or feu-duty paid to the superiors amounts to about L. 5,000,000 Sterling; but enough remains to leave the peasants in affluence. ‡ Education is universal, there being 1151 schools in Austria, and the proportion of those attending them to the actual population 1 in 15, and every person can read and write, but few of them possess information of any real value.§ The population of the two provinces was, in 1808, 1,708,000 souls; and the inhabitants slowly on the increase, the proportion of marriages being as 1 to 117.‖ The general enjoyment of landed property has not been found to produce any tendency towards a redundant population; habits of comfort and a high standard of living being universally diffused.¶

In STYRIA, CARINTHIA, the TYROL, and SALTZ-

* Reisbeck, ii. 71.

† Macdonald's Account of Austria, Edinburgh Encyclopædia.

‡ Reisbeck, ii. 71.

§ Macdonald, Ibid. and Moreau's Stat. de la Grande Bretagne, ii. 334.

‖ Raymond and Roth. Stat. de La Monarchie Autrichienne, 174—177.

¶ Reisbeck, ii. 71.

BURG, the aspect of the population is equally agreeable. Cultivation on the lower hills is often carried to the summits; while in the higher mountains, the white cottages, surrounded by verdant lawns, and shaven with the utmost care, present the most delightful spectacle.* Though inferior to Hungary in the fertility of the soil, these mountain districts are incomparably superior to it in industry and population.† The people long ago threw off the feudal yoke, and the liberty of these provinces has been practically established for many centuries. Property is *extremely subdivided*, and in many places is portioned among the inhabitants of the valleys in the same way as in the Swiss parishes.‡ In Saltzburg and most parts of the Tyrol every peasant holds his house, garden, and little domain in property; there is no occasion to inquire whether he depends upon a landlord; the cleanliness, comfort, and industry which prevail, speak a language not to be misunderstood.§ "The Saltzburg peasants," says Reisbeck, "eat meat every day; and they have abundance of good beer, bread, and brandy: their expensive mode of life would perhaps reduce them to poverty, were it not counterbalanced by admirable prudence and economy.‖ Taxes till of late years have been very inconsiderable. In Tyrol they are imposed by the States-General, which have always been animated by an unconquerable spirit of freedom, which the government, from the strength of the country, and the military spirit of its inhabitants, have thought it prudent to make no attempt to ex-

* Reisbeck, ii. 77. Personal observation. † Reisbeck, ii. 79.
‡ Ibid. ii. 79. § Ibid. i. 146. ‖ Ibid. and Personal Observation.

tinguish."* "When you see the farmers," says Reisbeck, "in these mountainous regions force nourishment from bare rocks, and reflect on the delightful plains of Hungary which lie desolate, the value of liberty and property strikes you in full force."† These countries, with Austria, Upper and Lower, are not half so large as Hungary; but they yield a much greater revenue: and there is throughout an appearance of easy circumstances, which present the most agreeable spectacle to the eyes of the traveller.‡

In BOHEMIA and MORAVIA the condition of the people is totally different. They have no artificial wants, and hardly any idea of comfort: they even deem it strange that they should be thought to stand in need of any thing.§ Their mode of life is as wretched as can well be imagined; their hovels of the worst description;‖ their food composed of the coarsest species of grain,¶ without any intermixture of animal food. The feudal system here exists in all its rigour; slavery is universal; the peasantry have no property of their own; nothing can alter their situation at the end of a year from what it was at its commencement.** Every peasant has a piece of ground on which he is allowed to work for the use of his family, so that the necessaries of life are not awanting; but it is only on certain days that he is at liberty to devote himself to it, and he has no means of acquiring a stock, or bettering his condition.†† Education is universal; the proportion of those attending the schools

* Reisbeck, i. 146. † Ibid. ii. 79.
‡ Personal observation, and Raymond and Roth. p. 196—199.
§ Reisbeck, ii. 137. ‖ Marshall, iii. 310. ¶ Ibid.
** Reisbeck. ii. 135. †† Marshall, iii. 310.

being 1 in 13 of the whole population,* but of what value is the mere power to read if the peasant has no money to purchase books, and if he had never heard of any work except those which his priest puts into his hand? To perceive either the blessings or the dangers of education, we must examine its effects when coexisting with general liberty and a free press: not when given as an useless faculty to a body of feudal slaves in a despotic monarchy.

In HUNGARY the situation of the labouring classes is hardly superior. By Nature it is the finest part of the emperor's dominions: an extensive and fertile plain, watered by numerous navigable rivers, and warmed by a genial and temperate sun, offers the most favourable elements for a flourishing agriculture. But its people are poor and indolent; six or seven families frequently dwell under the same roof; and the mode of cultivation is rude in the extreme.† The finest lands, capable of producing 60 or 100 fold, lie desert, and rich plains, which might vie with Lombardy in agricultural wealth, have sometimes not a single inhabitant.‡ The country seems literally buried under the magnitude of its agricultural riches; half the land under the plough is constantly fallow; and the peasants excuse their bad management by the want of a market for the productions of the earth.§ Its towns, though numerous and elegant beyond what could possibly be anticipated in so remote a country,‖ are wholly insufficient to absorb the redundant produce of the soil: and exportation is impossible in consequence of the physical and political difficulty of navi-

* Moreau, ii. 334. † Reisbeck, ii. 56. ‡ Ibid. ii. 21–22.
§ Reisbeck, ii. 56. ‖ Clarke's Travels, viii. 273. Walsh, p. 299—320.

gating the Danube on the one side, and the narrow spirit of the Austrian government, which, from the jealousy of its subjects in Austria proper, has loaded it with endless restrictions on the other.*

The people are not slaves; as in Poland and Bohemia, nor feuars, as in Austria; they are *tenants at will*, without leases or any permanent interest in the soil, liable to be turned away upon the slightest cause of complaint.† Hence their sole object is the gratification of their present wants; they marry early, and have numerous families;‡ but, being destitute of comfort or foresight, they drown their cares in wine, and frequently become pale and emaciated at thirty years of age.§ Property and habits of comfort are unknown in the country, where no stimulus to industry is to be found, and where the indigence of the cultivators furnishes the most painful contrast to the luxury and splendour of the nobles;‖ but it is gradually extending in the cities, whether the tenantry have the power of removing, and which in some places exhibit as much comfort and elegance as is to be seen in the plain of Yorkshire.¶

In the remotest parts of the country, however, and on the frontiers of European civilisation, a race of men has sprung up, whose situation and character afford a striking contrast to the general depression which prevails among the peasantry. On the frontiers of *Transylvania* a species of military colony of free peasants has been established, under the name of Saxons, to guard the passes against the dreaded incursions of the Turks.** Extraordinary privileges

* Reisbeck, ii. 23. † Ibid. ii. 31. ‡ Ibid. ii. 56. § Ibid. ii. 23.
‖ Reisbeck, ii. 65. ¶ Clarke, viii. 276—294. Walsh. ** Walsh, 287.

have been granted to these military settlers. *They hold their lands in freehold,* entirely free from all feudal services or burdens; they have a little Parliament of their own, which settles all the burdens to be imposed on the colony; and they enjoy on the frontier between Turkish despotism and Austrian power, all the privileges of British liberty.* The importance of preserving this valuable body of men, in their dangerous post, has rendered the government singularly careful of respecting their privileges.† The consequence of this political anomaly in the Hungarian states has been in the highest degree interesting. Scarcely has the traveller descended from the romantic and woody defiles which separate Transylvania from the Turkish provinces, when the settlements of these little freeholders attract his attention; the comfort and opulence which they exhibit afford a pleasing contrast to the desolation of the eastern states; the substantial dress, neat dwellings, and independent air of the military colonists, afford the clearest indications of their prosperous condition.‡ As he continues his journey, the same agreeable appearances continue wherever the Saxon freeholders have been established. In the midst of the indolence and poverty which prevails on the great estates which surround them, they exhibit the same marks of industry, comfort, and happiness; and it is with regret that he at length leaves their cheerful abodes for the mingled hovels and palaces of the Hungarian plains.§

In PRUSSIA, the condition of the labouring classes has long been singularly prosperous, notwithstand-

* Walsh, p. 287—289. † Ibid. p. 288.
‡ Walsh. § Clarke, viii. p. 267. Walsh, p. 288, 289.

ing the despotic nature of the government. The farmers are remarkable for the comfort in which they live; their dress, their food, furniture, and dwellings indicate a degree of wealth bordering on luxury.* The peasantry and labourers even are well fed; and in few countries are the rights and interests of the cultivators more sedulously attended to by government.† Forming the strength of the monarchy, which depends for its existence on the numbers and attachment of its military population, especial care has been taken in every reign that they should not be impoverished.‡ The whole machine of government is calculated for the protection and security of the cultivators; their land-tax, though heavy,§ is never raised;‖ and every possible regulation is enforced, which is likely to insure the prosperity of the class from whom both the armies are recruited, and the treasury filled.¶ On the other hand, the manufacturers, whose interests have not, till of late years, been so much attended to by government till recent times, do not by any means exhibit the same symptoms of prosperity.** Education is more sedulously attended to by Government than in any other country of Europe: not only are schools, under the direction of Government, established in every parish, but the duty of giving their children the elements of education is considered as a legal obligation upon their parents, which is enforced by the state authorities, and no less than one-tenth of the population are in constant attendance on the parish schools, being more than Scot-

* Reisbeck, ii. 269. † Ibid. ‡ Moore's View, ii. 174—186.
§ Marshall, iii. 286. ‖ Reisbeck, ii. 269.
¶ Reisbeck, ii. 276. ** Ibid.

land, where it is 1 in 11.* The statistical tables exhibit a high degree of information; no less than 1 in 7 of the whole population being in attendance on the primary schools:† but this only shows how extremely deceptive a test that one fact, but a single element in the production of general information, in reality is; and how entirely incapable it is, without general liberty and a free press, to influence, in any material degree, the habits or character of the people.

In consequence of the protection and regular administration of the Prussian government, both agriculture and population have made extraordinary advances of late years. The inhabitants have increased twofold in the last half century,‡ and the present rate of increase will *double their present numbers in the next twenty-six years.* § Should this rate continue, it will be the nearest approach to an American rate of increase which any European state has presented. ‖ There are no symptoms, however, of redundant numbers; everywhere is to be seen an astonishing increase of farms and agriculture;¶ but no appearances of distress. **

These indications of prosperity are particularly conspicuous in *Silesia.* This opulent province is full of flourishing cities, numerous villages, and neat farmhouses.†† Manufactures have long flourished in the province, and a large part of the wealth thus acquired has been laid out in the purchase and improvement of land, which has diffused an uncommon activity and spirit of freedom among the peasantry. ‡‡ Land is

* Moreau, i. 333. † Ibid. ‡ Reisbeck, ii. 289.
§ Dupin's Force Commerciale, Vol. i. 36. ‖ Ibid.
¶ Reisbeck, ii. 289. ** Russell, i. †† Marshall, iii. 269, 270.
‡‡ Marshall, iii. 269, 270.

let in farms to the peasantry, who are all freemen, and exhibit a most uncommon degree of comfort and opulence.* Small properties, however, *are extremely common over the whole province;* and it is to this direction that all the savings of the middling and lower ranks are turned ;† and these little estates are always inhabited by a *decent, industrious, and comfortable people.* ‡ The ease and prosperous aspect of the province is the more remarkable, as the taxes are extremely heavy; and it can be ascribed only to the practical mildness and regularity of the government, and the entire absence of all the feudal privileges which desolate the adjoining provinces of Bohemia. §

In BAVARIA the appearance of the population is widely different, at least in the agricultural districts of the country. From the court to the cottage *indolence* is the characteristic of the country.‖ The peasants are nominally *villains,* but with the enjoyment of much greater property in land and houses than in Bohemia.¶ Wealth is most unequally distributed among the tenantry; some of them are extremely opulent, and surrounded by others miserably indigent.** Though placed in the same latitude with Austria, they have no wine, and but few fruits, and are unacquainted with any species of culture, but the rude practice transmitted to them from their forefathers.†† In extenuation of their indolence in these matters, the peasants plead their want of internal communication, and the impossibility of exportation, from all their rivers running into Austria.‡‡ From these causes, though the soil is rich, and not half the land is under proper

* Marshall, iii. 275. † Ibid. ‡ Ibid. § Ibid. 272.
‖ Reisbeck, i. 116. ¶ Marshall, iii. 315. ** Reisbeck, i. 118.
†† Schloetzer, Agric. de Bavaria, 92. ‡‡ Reisbeck, i. 116.

management, agriculture is so deficient, that, except in favourable seasons, it does not produce enough for its inhabitants.* The people are dirty, and seem to enjoy few of the comforts of life, though greatly more than in Bohemia;† but the great cause of the backward state of the country is the *extreme ignorance* which everywhere prevails; an ignorance so gross and universal, that it draws a perpetual night over the rural inhabitants.‡ The Catholic religion, which here is to be found in its most bigoted form, opposes an invincible barrier to the progress of useful knowledge, and the parish priests, though in reality as untutored as the peasants, have an instinctive aversion to every species of information.§ Taxation is injudiciously laid on: the ecclesiastical proprietors, who are extremely numerous, being entirely exempted, and the burden laid on the peasantry, with little regard to the means of bearing it.‖ The proportion of marriages is as 1 to 93, and the population 1,180,000; the people, though inferior by one-half to what they might be under better management, being under the influence of none of the restrictions provided to the principle of increase.¶

"One would imagine," says Reisbeck, "that the Erzegebirge and the Thuringian forests are the boundaries placed by nature between light and darkness, riches and poverty, freedom and slavery. Probably in the whole extent of the world, a stronger contrast

* Schloetzer, 104. † Reisbeck, i. 118.

‡ Reisbeck, i. 116. The proportion of children at school to the whole people is 1 in 7, nearly double that of Scotland: another proof of the delusion which that single fact alone would spread, where free institutions are awanting.—Moreau, i. 333.

§ Reisbeck, i. 116. ‖ Art. de Bavaria, Edin. Encylop.

¶ Reisbeck, ii. 187.

cannot be found than between *Saxony* and *Bavaria*, and yet nature has done more for the latter than the former."* Everything demonstrates that the Saxon farmer is a freeman: animated countenances, better figures, and universal cleanliness, are the agreeable features which strike a traveller on his first entrance into the country.† The population is very great, amounting, prior to the late partition to 1,900,000:‡ whereas Bavaria, though far richer by nature, had not much more than *half that number*: but yet the comfort of the inhabitants was *infinitely greater* in the former country than the latter.§ All these advantages Saxony owes to the free spirit of her constitution, and the admirable education of her people. The power of the elector is more limited than any other prince in Germany. The Saxon people have had spirit enough to preserve that free constitution which they transmitted to their English descendants; and many striking points of resemblance may still be traced both between the manners and institutions of the two countries.‖ The court cannot make the smallest law without the consent of the States-General; and they not only grant subsidies, but extend their attention to other branches of government.¶ Education is universal; the inhabitants of the smallest villages in the mountains, apparently shut out from the world, are better informed, and more polished than the citizens of the largest towns in the south of Germany.** Though often poor, they are always frugal, cheerful, and cleanly, and abject distress is hardly ever to be seen.††

* Reisbeck, ii. 187. † Ibid. 154. ‡ Ibid. 177. § Russell, i. p. 172.
‖ Reisbeck, ii. 173–4. ¶ Ibid. 174–5. ** Ibid. 192. †† Ibid.

The vast and varied picture of Germany presents the most interesting subject for reflection. In its happiness, equally as its misery, in its bright as much as its dark shades, it illustrates the influence of GOVERNMENT upon the situation and prospects of mankind. In some districts it exhibits poverty and suffering in the midst of the greatest abundance of natural riches; in others plenty and prosperity under natural disadvantages; indigence is seen pervading a scanty, and comfort a numerous population. The only clue to these varied appearances is the *political condition of the people*, and they leave on the mind an indelible impression, how little public happiness is dependent on the gifts of nature, or the stage of social advancement, and how much on the habits which government has diffused, the desires which property has awakened, and the intelligence which education has called forth.

XI.—IRELAND.

Ireland exhibits, perhaps, the most remarkable phenomenon that is to be met with at this time in the whole civilized world; and it has accordingly excited more attention, though hitherto with very little good effect, than any other country in Europe. For the last fifteen years, at least one-half of the time of every Session of Parliament has been entirely engrossed with Irish affairs; and the greatest talent in Great Britain has been devoted to its consideration. Notwithstanding all this, however, all the evils of a redundant population and general destitution continue there unabated; all the principal towns in Great Britain are overwhelmed with an inundation of Irish

poor; and at length decisive evidence has been obtained as to the extent to which these evils have gone in Ireland, by the evidence adduced by the Poor Law Commissioners, who so minutely and laboriously investigated the condition of the poor in that country; who have not only collected an unparalleled mass of evidence as to the enormous amount of destitution which prevails, but ascertained that there are above two millions of persons in that country who are in such a state of poverty, as generally to stand in need of parochial assistance. *

It certainly appears at first sight a most extraordinary circumstance, that so much, it may be said, such unparalleled destitution should exist in a country which is not only under the direction of a Christian government, but which has long formed part of the dominions of Great Britain—the institutions of which have carried human prosperity and elevation elsewhere to the highest pitch; and for above forty years has been actually incorporated with the realm which, by universal consent, stands at the head of European civilisation. The violence of party spirit, which has long distracted that unhappy island, has rendered it a matter of unusual difficulty to ascertain the truth, either in regard to the actual circumstances of its inhabitants, or the causes to which their sufferings have been owing. The magnitude and importance of the subject could not be adequately discussed in less than several volumes. All that can be attempted in this place is, to point out the actual condition of the great bulk of the Irish population, and to explain in simple propositions, the causes to which it seems to be owing.

* Report of Commissioners on Irish Poor, and evidence annexed, 42, 117.

It is unhappily superfluous to refer to authority for proof of the great destitution which prevails alike in the urban and rural population of Ireland. Every traveller who has visited that country can bear witness to the vast extent of the indigence which prevails. Notwithstanding the unparalleled munificence of the British Government to the poor in Dublin, and the grant of sums from the Exchequer, annually, to the extent of no less than L. 175,000 a-year;* and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the beneficence of individuals in that great city, the people are reduced to such a state of misery from the absence of the greater part of the landholders, from the redundance of population, and the want of any legal relief, that the Mendicity Society have been compelled to resort to the extraordinary, and perhaps unexampled expedient, of marching an array of three or four thousand beggars through the streets of Dublin, in order to awaken, by their hideous exhibition, the sympathy of the benevolent. The habitual misery of the poor is just as great in Cork, Limerick, Londonderry, and all the other great cities of the kingdom; and their sufferings in crowded alleys of these cities

* Granted by British Parliament to Protestant Schools

in Dublin,	L. 38,331
Foundling Hospital,	32,000
House of Industry,	36,640
Fever Hospital,	12,000
Dublin Police,	26,600
Lock Hospital,	8,307
Dublin Society,	9,230
Lunatic Asylum,	7,000
Society for Education of Poor,	5,538
	L. 175,646—

Parl. Report, 1818, and Suppl. to Encyclopædia Brit. v. 108.

during the great contagious fevers of 1817 and 1827, on the latter of which occasions, sixty thousand fever patients passed through the Fever Hospital of Dublin alone, are such as would exceed belief, if not ascertained by unquestionable and Parliamentary authority. *

The condition of the people over the greater part of Ireland is equally bad; and, in fact, this frightful accumulation of abject poverty in the great towns, is the result chiefly of the total absence either of any means of comfortable subsistence, or relief from destitution, in the country. The population of the island amounts at present to about eight millions of souls; and although this number is not one-third of what might be comfortably maintained in the country, if industry generally prevailed, and cultivation was carried on in an improved manner, yet it is greatly more than, under existing circumstances, can earn a livelihood. Not only are the wages of labour in general miserable, amounting often to not more than one-half of that which a similar class of workmen obtain in Great Britain; but during the whole winter months, no employment whatever is to be had; and the peasantry subsist entirely upon the little patches of potato land which are attached to their dwellings. When spring returns, the head of the family plants his potatoes; and in vast numbers of cases locks up his house, and leaves home in quest of employment in the neighbouring island; while his wife takes the tea-kettle, often her only article of furniture, in her hand, and, followed by a train of young children clothed in tatters, earns a precarious subsistence, till the potato crop is ready

* Report on the Fever of 1827.

for lifting, by soliciting alms on the highways, or partaking in the never-failing charity of the cottages of the farmers and of the poor. *

In 1754, Ireland was computed to contain 2,372,634 souls; in 1791, 4,206,612; and in 1840, its inhabitants are certainly not less than 8,500,000. † Thus, in less than ninety years, its inhabitants have increased *fourfold*; a rate of increase for so long a period probably unexampled in an old state in any previous age of the world. At present, its rural population is by far the densest in any country in existence: it is not remarkable for the number or magnitude of its great towns; and yet its inhabitants are more numerous in proportion to the extent of surface than even England, Italy, Flanders, France, or Holland; besprinkled as they are with the largest and most opulent cities and manufacturing establishments in Christendom.‡ This unparalleled magnitude of population, with its rapid increase, becomes the more surprising, when it is recollected that Ireland has, with the exception of the linen fabrics in the north, no important manufactures; that its exports, as compared with those of any other part of the British empire, are inconsiderable;§ that

* Personal observation. † Wakefield, ii. 712; Newenham, 41.

‡ Population of Ireland per square marine league, 2545

England,	do.	2524
Scotland,	do.	864
Italy,	do.	1967
Holland,	do.	1330
France,	do.	1790
Belgium,	do.	2468.

—Humboldt, xi. 57.

	Irish Exports. Official value.	Exports from Great Britain. Official value.
‡ Irish exports, 1784,	L. 3,400,049	L. 15,734,062

Dublin and Cork are its only large commercial towns, that its agriculture is in so backward a state, that, according to the best authorities, it would require an expenditure of L. 120,000,000, to bring its cultivation up to a level with that of the neighbouring island of Great Britain;* and that the average rent of its surface is only 17s. an English acre. †

These extraordinary statistical facts and apparent contradictions have forcibly arrested the attention, as well they might, of all thinking men in Great Britain; and the evil has been forced on the consideration even of the most heedless, by the prodigious influx of the Irish poor into the neighbouring island; an immigration so great, that, as already noticed, it amounted between 1801 and 1821 to a million of souls; and since that time, has probably increased to a still greater number. ‡ Various, accordingly, have been the explanations put forth of this remarkable phenomenon; and unhappily a subject worthy of the calmest and most deliberate consideration of superior minds, has become the topic on which party violence and factious ambition have fastened with intense avidity, until it has become well nigh impossible to extricate the truth out of the conflicting mass of contradictory statements.

	Irish Exports. Official value.	Exports from Great Britain. Official value.
Irish Exports, 1794,	L. 4,665,162	L. 20,390,180
1804,	4,770,388	26,462,117
1821,	7,782,875	43,332,236
1825,	9,234,210	45,117,336

—Porter's Parl. Tables, vi. 175, and i. 177.

* Young's Ireland, ii. 9; Wakefield, i. 585. † Wakefield, i. 305.

‡ Humboldt, xi. 1.

English oppression, Orange intolerance, ecclesiastical tyranny, have been fiercely denounced by the one party as the causes of this unparalleled density and destitution of the people; Irish recklessness, savage violence, Roman Catholic superstition, as loudly re-echoed by the other, as the real causes of the misery under the load of which not Ireland alone, but the whole empire, are now so heavily burdened. If the preceding principles be well founded, the extraordinary appearances of the Irish population will admit of a very easy solution, without adopting the extremes of either of these conflicting opinions; or rather by showing, that, while both parties have been lamentably to blame in their conduct towards this unhappy people, their faults have consisted chiefly in matters which, as they had no bearing on party strife, have hitherto met with very little attention on either side.

Ireland is proved by statistical returns to have an extremely dense, she is known to every one's observation to contain a most miserable, population. It may be predicated with unerring certainty, therefore, of her inhabitants, that they have possessed in great abundance the means of subsistence, and been kept in a state of almost total ignorance of the enjoyment of comforts; that the spring of population has found ample room for expansion from the plenty of the necessaries, and its limitations been kept in almost entire abeyance from the absence of the conveniences of life. The inquiry, therefore, is reduced to the two points, What has rendered food so abundant and comfort so rare among them?

The fertility of the soil, joined to the introduction of the potato, unquestionably has been the main

cause of the physical means of the expansion afforded to the principle of population. Had it not been for the facility of multiplying food which these circumstances afforded, the disposition to increase, arising from the general destitution which prevailed, might have been as great as they are now, but the numbers of the people would not have reached a third of their present amount. Population, how much disposed to press, from the general low standard of comfort among the poor, on the limits of subsistence, would still have been restrained within narrower bounds, from the impossibility of rearing a family; and the inhabitants of the Emerald Isle, like those of Turkey, Persia, or Barbary, would have exhibited the well known combination of extreme penury, with comparatively small and possibly declining numbers. But the fertility of the soil, and the vast extent of its arable ground, much greater in proportion to the whole surface than either that of England or Scotland,* afforded the means, if a tolerable degree of security was enjoyed by the cultivators, of multiplying to a very great extent the means of subsistence; while the potato, which thrives admirably, even under its rude and imperfect agriculture, at once tripled the productive powers of the soil, by yielding three times as much solid nourishment from an acre as could be obtained from wheaten crops.† The Government of Great Britain, though miserably deficient in some of

	Ireland.	England.	Scotland.
* Arable acres and meadows,	12,125,280	25,631,100	5,264,909
Improvable wastes, -	4,900,000	3,454,000	5,950,000
Total surface, -	19,441,944	32,342,400	19,738,930

—Porter's Progress of the Nation, i. 177.

† Newenham, 340. Young's Ireland, Appendix, 24, 12.

the most important duties of legislation, was yet sufficiently powerful and just to give the cultivator at least security for enjoying the rude produce of his hands; and that they have enjoyed that protection their prodigious increase affords decisive evidence. Thus the Irish people possessed extraordinary facilities for the multiplication of subsistence; and it might be consequently concluded, that, if the limitations to increase arising from the general spread of artificial wants had not made any considerable progress among them, a numerous population, with a low standard of comfort, would, to a certain extent, be the result.

But more was requisite to produce the prodigious redundance and almost boundless increase of the Irish agricultural population; and when the causes which brought about these habits are taken into consideration, they not only prove that Ireland is no exception to the general principles already illustrated, but affords the strongest possible confirmation of them.

1. Without doubt the first circumstance which contributed to produce the low standard of comfort, and unbounded disposition to increase in the Irish poor, was their subjugation by a foreign nation, who did *not make their island the seat of government.* The example of the Norman conquest of England is a decisive proof, that such a conquest, if effected, of so considerable a country as to occupy the first care, and to become wound up with the highest interests of the victor, is not only nowise inconsistent with subsequent prosperity, but may become a principal element in its formation.* But the case is widely different when the conquest is effected by a country which go-

* See Alison's Europe, ii. 68, 72.

verns its acquisition as a province. There the evil effects of not forming the chief object of government are immediately felt. What Hungary is to Austria, and Poland to Russia, that Ireland has long been to Britain.

2. The very fact, however, of this conquest of Ireland, and its subsequent retention without difficulty by England, argues a defect in vigour or durable resolution in the native Irish race. The proof of this is decisive. Scotland now contains less than three millions of inhabitants, and Ireland nearly nine; and the same proportion, with little variation, has subsisted through the whole history of both countries. Scotland, moreover, has 5,000,000 of arable acres, and 12,000,000 of irreclaimable waste; Ireland has 5,000,000 of waste, and 12,000,000 of arable acres. Nevertheless, Edward I. invaded Scotland with 80,000 men and was in the end defeated, and the inroad has been renewed with a like force by his successors at least twenty different times, yet always terminated in disasters and expulsion from the Scottish territory. Henry II. invaded Ireland with 1100 men at arms, 2000 archers, and at once subjugated the whole country; and though repeated attempts have since been made by the native population to throw off the English yoke, they have never approached even to success, and never succeeded in collecting a force which ten thousand English could not with ease disperse.

3. But in these repeated though abortive attempts to break off the English connection, an evil of the very first magnitude was inflicted on Ireland, by English severity, for the consequences of which both countries are now, and have been for a very long period, undergoing retribution. This was the immense

confiscation of land which took place upon each revolt; a system of attainder carried through successive ages to such an extent, particularly in the reigns of Elizabeth and Cromwell, that nearly the whole landed property of the country changed hands.* Had the new proprietors been soldiers of fortune who settled on their acquired estates, as the Normans did in England, or the followers of Robert Bruce, who effected a similar transfer in Scotland, the evil would soon have been obliterated. But that was not the case. The persons who got the grants from the English crown were English nobles, or mercantile companies, whose favour it was their object to propitiate; and they could not or would not leave their possessions or places of business in Great Britain to settle in semibarbarous wilds on the other side of the channel. They devolved the care of their great estates, in consequence, upon stewards and tenants, who farmed for a certain fixed rent immense districts of land in all parts of the country. As these districts became filled up with cottars, the collection of the rents by themselves became impossible, and they in their turn devolved the irksome and sometimes dangerous duty on inferior tenants, who again did the same with the districts which they acquired. Thence the *middlemen* and universal oppression of the actual cultivators over the country; and to this cause, more than any other, the slow growth and entire absence in many districts of artificial wants among the peasantry. To such a length has it been carried, that it is not unusual to have *ten* middlemen interposed between the owner of the soil and the actual cultivator; all of whom live, and sometimes make for-

* Alison's Europe, v. 276. Lingard, xiv. 28.

tunes on the produce of his labour; and the rent of ordinary potato ground to the man who actually works the land is often from five to eight guineas an acre.*

4. The application to Ireland of the English law, which permits the owner of the land, as over-lord, to distrain the effects of all tenants and subtenants who are brought upon the soil, has been attended with little injury to the habits of the people in any part of Britain; because the practice of subletting, at least beyond a single subtenant, has never been generally established. But in Ireland it has proved to the last degree disastrous, because that practice being, from the causes now mentioned, almost universal, and a number of tenants generally interposed between the owner of the soil and the actual cultivator, there was no limit to the risk of the stock or effects of a farmer being swept off by the execution either of the landlord, or any of the numerous intermediate landlords, who were clothed with his rights, if there was a failure on the part of any one of the subordinate holders to make good his stipulated rent. Nothing, accordingly, was more common than for a peasant who had paid his rent to his own landlord, from whom he took the land, to be distrained for some deficit owing by some of his superiors to the owner of the soil. * It is needless to enlarge on the necessary effect of such a system, to which the Irish landlords long clung, as to the Magna Charta of their estates. It necessarily rendered the growth of agricultural capital or habits of comfort among the peasantry impossible, and chained them in the most advanced stages

* Wakefield, i. 287.

† Art. Ireland, Encyclopædia Brit. Sup. v. 111.

of society to those physical enjoyments alone of which they could not be deprived by human injustice.

5. Freedom, the most valuable blessing that can be conferred upon civilized and enlightened, is the greatest curse that can be inflicted on savage and ignorant man; for it is surrendering him, when unable to direct them, to the guidance of his own impetuous passions. It has been repeatedly observed by travellers who have visited other countries after traversing Ireland, that in none of them, not even the most despotic, is misery so general and poignant as in that scene of woe; and an intelligent traveller has recently observed with evident justice, that not only could the Irish peasant see much to envy in the condition of the serfs of Russia,* but even he would be immensely benefited by an exchange with the convicts who toil in the wilds of Siberia.† Unquestionably the condition of the Negroes in the West Indies, prior to their

"* I have no hesitation in saying that the condition of the peasantry here, (near Twer,) is far superior to the same class in Ireland. In Russia provisions are plentiful, good, and cheap, while in Ireland they are scanty, poor, and dear, the greater part being exported from the latter country. Good comfortable log-houses are here found in every village, immense droves of cattle are scattered over unlimited pastures, and whole forests of fuel may be had for a trifle. With ordinary industry and economy, the Russian peasant may become rich, especially those of the villages situated between the capitals."—Cochrane's Travels in Siberia, 79.

"† In Siberia, the government convicts have ample time to work their lands, and reap abundance of corn and vegetables, Scarcely any full-grown man can be found who has not two or three horses, and as many horned cattle, employed during the season in carrying the ore, for which they are paid at the rate of thirteen copecs the pood, which yields during the time employed a sum adequate for the purchase of a pound and a half of meat and three of bread daily, in addition to the lands allotted to the convicts."—Ibid. i. 190.

late emancipation, generally speaking, was infinitely preferable. It is perhaps the worst effect of that well-meant but most disastrous measure, that it will approximate the condition and habits of the Negro race in those beautiful islands to that of the Irish peasantry.* The Irish therefore, suffered immensely by their political connection with and dependence on a country so infinitely more advanced in the career of civilisation as Great Britain; and no one step in their history has been more prolific of disaster, than that premature emancipation of their peasantry from the bonds of predial servitude which has in consequence taken place.

These are painful truths, and they will be unpalatable: but those who have the welfare of the human race at heart, will tell them openly, without any regard to existing passions or prepossessions. No one can contemplate the condition of the Irish peasantry, and reflect on their disregard of human life, their listless and improvident habits, their total destitution, frequent contagious disorders, and woful penury when seized with disease; and above all, their boundless habits of increase, without being sensible that they are in the condition when Nature intended that they should be the property and at once subject to the control, and maintained at the expense of a master. Care

* Many grievous instances of cruelty, doubtless, occurred in the West Indies during the days of slavery; but the general condition of the people was prosperous in the extreme. Their cottages, gardens, and overhanging fruit trees, exhibited a scene of rural felicity rarely to be met with; their fare and accommodations were superior to those of the English labourer; by working two days in the week, on their own account, they could often save L. 30 a-year; and in two years and a-half earn their own freedom.—Personal knowledge.

in sickness, maintenance in old age, security from penury, and hopeless destitution, are the first requisites of human felicity in such stages of society. Manifold as are the abuses of slavery, they are to savage man productive of incomparably less suffering than the destitution of freedom.

6. When slavery was abolished, poor laws became indispensable; and yet nothing was done for their establishment. In many most important particulars the Emerald Isle has suffered most grievously from what Arthur young justly calls "the occasional fits of insanity in the Irish Parliament," but in none so much as in the total neglect, or rather obstinate refusal, of its legislature to establish any compulsory legal provision for the poor. No poor law, it is well known, existed in Ireland till it was fairly forced upon them a few years ago by the British Parliament, much against their will, by the horrible destitution of the people, and the vast numbers in which, from the want of any relief at home, they immigrated into the adjoining island of Great Britain. Now, the dissolution of the monasteries, and the transference of the estates of the Church to the Protestant clergy, had occasioned just the same necessity for legal relief there which was so strongly felt in the neighbouring island, and produced at the same time the 43d of Elizabeth, and the Scotch Act 1579. The existence of this immense accumulation of unrelieved misery for two hundred and fifty years in Ireland, has been by far the greatest sin for which the British government has to answer; and it is under its effects, accordingly, that the empire is now universally and justly labouring. The miserable wretches thus allowed by a selfish, hard-hearted legislature of

absent proprietors, to linger on year after year and century after century, did what mankind invariably do in such circumstances; they all became the parents of a population not less destitute and degraded than themselves. Pauperism, recklessness, want of foresight were thus perpetuated in the land; and in the midst of the British empire a perennial stream of destitution and redundant numbers was opened, which, flowing incessantly for two centuries and a half, has overspread all the three kingdoms, and brought upon their inhabitants that just retribution, which so long continued a neglect of human suffering could not fail, under the administration of a righteous Providence, in the end to induce.

7. While suffering under so many evils inflicted by their superiors or foreign hands, the Irish peasantry have much to answer for, in the almost incredible violence and infatuation which has so often led them to drive capital and industry out of their country, by murdering the persons who introduced either agricultural or manufacturing improvements, or burning the most promising industrial establishments. They have been justly characterized by Sir H. Vivian, in his evidence before Parliament on the Coercion Act, as the people in Europe who evince the greatest indifference to human life;* and, admitting that the Government which has for so long a period exposed the Irish peasantry to so many causes of evil, are in a great degree answerable for this disgraceful characteristic, it is impossible not to feel satisfied, that much is also to be ascribed to the Irish character itself, which has retained this sanguinary propensity under circumstances

* Sir H. Vivian's Evidence before Coercion Committee, 1833.

where it might reasonably be expected to have yielded to the increasing indulgence of the British sway and extended humanity of the age.* And nothing can be clearer, than that until this frightful evil is removed by the strong arm of Government, or the improvement in the habits of the people, all attempts to induce British capital to emigrate to that country, or to spread more industrious or provident habits among them, will prove almost entirely nugatory.

8. Situated as the Irish peasantry are, the great proportion of them who belong to the Romish church, must be considered as a most serious evil. That the ministers of that persuasion may in some circumstances be a blessing to mankind is abundantly proved, especially by the examples of La Vendee, Tyrol, and parts of Spain; but when temporal passion is wound up with Romish ambition, and the arts of an illiterate and impassioned priesthood are employed for the purpose of rousing the people to aim at political ascendency over their Protestant landlords, by means of violence and intimidation, it is impossible to conceive a state of things fraught with more disastrous consequences to the best interests of humanity.† It necessarily sets the tenantry everywhere at war with their landlords; adds religious bitterness to civil dissension; and introduces hatred and animosity be-

* Offences committed in Ireland.

	Murder.	Assault with intent to murder.	Robbery.	Burglary.	Rape.	Burning houses.	Attacks on houses.
1832,	248	179	1172	844	212	571	1675
Persons committed in Ireland.							
1832,	429	22	98	191	239	27	314
1836,	340	127	198	120	197	38	209
1837,	269	111	130	182	144	41	81

—Parl. Papers, 14th March 1834. Porter's Tables, vi. 134, vii. 139.

† Lords' Report on Irish Affairs, 1839. Appendix, 236, 462.

tween those classes upon whose union and co-operation the improvement of the habits of the people is mainly dependent.* The Roman Catholic clergy also everywhere encourage marriage among their flocks, on account of the fees they receive for officiating on such occasions. The habit of early and imprudent marriages is accordingly* much more universal among them than the Protestants.† This circumstance adds to the tendency, already sufficiently great, which the peasantry feel that way, from their destitute condition and ignorance of artificial wants. As a natural consequence, there is hardly a peasant of twenty who is not married, and invariably the greater the destitution of the people, the greater is the rapidity with which they contract the marriage union.‡

These are the real evils of Ireland, the circumstances which have overspread the empire with Irish paupers, and made their unhappy isle the great *officina pauperum*, for the whole dominions of Great Britain. Education is obtained on easy terms; the proportion attending the primary schools is greater than in Scotland;§ and every writer on the country has observed that, though moral or religious information are deplorably deficient, the mere rudiments of knowledge are very generally diffused.‖ But of what avail is the power of reading if the poverty of the people is such that not one in an hundred can ever purchase a book; or if any books are acquired,

* Newenham, 51; Wakefield, ii. 690. † Wakefield, ii. 578.

‡ Parl. Report 1836 on Irish Poor 338; and Revan's Evils of Ireland, 81.

§ 1833.

	Scholars at school.	Population in 1833.	Proportion of scholars to whole population.
Scotland,	220,000	2,450,000	1 to 10
Ireland,	857,692	7,949,000	1 to 9

—Moreau, Stat. de la Grand Bret. ii. 333.

‖ Wakefield, ii. 404. Survey of Cork, 714. Wild's Killarney, 167.

they are in general the legends of saints, or histories of thieves, prostitutes, and smugglers, calculated only to inflame the passions or augment the disorders of both sexes.*

The political topics which have been so ardently promoted by the popular party in the empire, and been the object of such vehement contention, and laborious investigation in the British Parliament for the last forty years, have hardly any bearing on the real condition of the Irish poor; nor have they reaped any benefit, but rather the reverse, from the disastrous agitation in which they have kept the people for half a century. Catholic emancipation had no effect whatever in relieving their distresses; the Reform Bill has increased them by widening the breach between the landlords and their tenantry; the virtual abolition of tithes has only transferred their amount to rent; municipal reform only keeps open the ghastly wounds of the country, and foments political passion among a people wholly incapable of either exercising the duties of self-government, or bearing its excitement. The only real benefits which the Irish people have received from the legislation of the twenty years when they have been the object of sedulous attention to Parliament, have been the increase and general establishment of the police force; the great improvements in the administration of justice by the county assistant barristers, and the introduction even on an imperfect plan of poor's rates.

These, however, are immense blessings, for they tend at once to check the vices, arrest the disorders, and relieve the sufferings of the poor; and they have gone far to counterbalance the evils inflicted on the

* Wakefield, ii. 398, 399.

country by the continuance of the political agitation of which it has so long been the victim. One dreadful and irremediable evil remains behind,—and it is to be feared is incapable of removal,—and that is the calamitous circumstance, that the opinion of great numbers in both islands demands for the inhabitants of each the same rights and institutions; a demand founded on the principle that institutions which suit men in one stage of society, will prove equally beneficial in every other; a principle so apparently equitable, that in the end it may perhaps be impossible to resist its concession, at least in the British empire; which, nevertheless, is in reality about as rational as it would be to expect the same measure for clothes to fit a stripling of thirteen, a man of thirty, and a gray-haired veteran of seventy; but which will probably require more than one generation to feel its disastrous effects before the fatal error it involves is generally perceived, and which is in all likelihood not destined to be abandoned by mankind, till it has cut off more lives, and caused more misery, than either the French Revolution or the sword of Napoleon.

XII.—Great Britain.

England and Scotland exhibit a curious and highly interesting object of study to the political philosopher; for two opposite agencies, each of surpassing power and energy, seem to be acting in both countries. If the experience of all ages and of every individual has probably confirmed the observation of the Persian officer, Araspes, whose virtue sunk before the beauty of the fair Panthea, that he felt as if he had two souls, one exhorting him to noble and generous,

the other to base and selfish deeds ;* with equal justice it may be said, that almost every political state, and Great Britain above them all, exhibits two opposite principles in incessant and opposite agency among their inhabitants, one tending to human happiness, virtue, and elevation; another to national misery, vice, and degradation.

If we survey the British empire in one view, no country in the world ever presented such sources of prosperity, or contained so many institutions calculated both to secure present happiness to its inhabitants, and establish those habits among them on which their durable welfare is dependent. When we recollect the noble institutions which for above two hundred and fifty years have given relief to the whole indigent persons throughout the realm, and which, however abused in their practical application, have prevented during that long period any part of the lower orders from falling into that state of hopeless destitution in which redundant population invariably flows; when we reflect on the long security and protection from the horrors of actual warfare which the island has enjoyed, the inhabitants of whose southern countries have not for a thousand years seen the fires of an enemy's camp; when we survey the prodigious wealth which has during this extraordinary period of pacific repose grown up among all classes, and spread its vivifying influence through so many branches of society; when we observe the unparalleled extent to which habits of comfort and the enjoyments of opulence have diffused themselves through society, and call to mind, that, if the paupers of England,—and Mr Jacob has

* Xen. Cyr. vi. 3.

declared they do,—fare better than the industrious poor of most European states, every other rank above the lowest are habituated to enjoyments in a still higher degree superior to those of a corresponding class in other countries; and when we bear in mind, that all this has arisen in consequence of the patient industry, and unwearied activity of a people whose spirit of freedom has worked out a constitution which, beyond any other that ever existed, combines security to the fruits of industry, and the means of unlimited elevation to the individual, with stability and durability to the national institutions;—we are naturally led to the conclusion, that in Great Britain, if anywhere else in the world, the elements of public and private happiness are to be found, and that there, in a peculiar manner, the operation of the principles destined to secure the welfare of society, and bring the spring of population permanently under the control of the limitations arising from general prosperity, might be expected to be discerned.

While no person can be either historically acquainted with the past periods, or practically with the present condition of the British empire, without being convinced that these sources of public happiness have been long pouring a stream of prosperity and well-being over the land, there are yet many features in the condition of its inhabitants, especially at the present time, which point not less clearly to the agency of causes having an opposite tendency of nearly equal power, and which may ere long turn the balance the other way, and prove fatal alike to the happiness of the people, and the greatness of the state. If we contemplate the mass of indigence which in Scotland

overspreads the Highland districts, and festers like a gangrene in all the great towns to the north of the Tweed; if we consider the enormous quantity of spirits which are consumed in its mercantile communities, and the unparalleled increase of crime with which for fifteen years it has been accompanied; if we recollect the general loosening of moral obligation which has taken place in the manufacturing districts of all parts of the island, and the vast conspiracy against life and property which has been growing up for many years past, without any compunction or hesitation among so many hundred thousands of the working classes, especially in the manufacturing districts of England; if we reflect on the prodigious increase of crime in that country, the vast extent of its female profligacy, and the debasing habit of intoxication which has so generally followed the reduction of the duties on beer; we can hardly avoid the conclusion, that causes of evil of peculiar power and malignity have been in operation in all parts of the island, to which, if not restrained in their operation, the empire itself will in the course of time fall a victim.

To illustrate the causes, and give a detail of the effect of these sources of evil in the British empire, is a leading object of this work, and they will form the subject of an ample commentary in the succeeding volume. A few hints, calculated to point out the heads of subsequent inquiry, and their bearing on the condition of the people, can alone be afforded in this place.

Various causes have conspired to produce the present diseased state of the population in the British empire; some natural, and necessarily arising from

the progress of society; others artificial, and to be ascribed to the peculiar circumstances in which we have been placed for the last hundred years.

1. The first and greatest of these is the enormous accumulation of wealth in a few hands; and the consequent creation of a vast and indigent population who live upon its expenditure, and are dependent upon its support.

The immense increase of our urban, when compared with our rural, population during the last thirty years, as evinced by the population returns already quoted,* proves how powerfully this cause of weakness is spreading amongst us. Vast possessions, in a late stage of society, necessarily lead to the multiplication of city population; because the wealth of their owners is spent in the luxuries and conveniences which towns alone can produce. In the rude ages of the world the barons reside in the country, and maintain their retainers in rude plenty around them; as civilisation advances they are impelled by an universal and invincible attraction toward cities, and destined to accumulate round themselves, in these great depositaries of wealth, a vast population who have not struck their roots into the soil, but are exclusively maintained by the wages of labour. Everybody must be sensible how powerfully this cause is operating in Great Britain at this time; how much the rural proprietors are really absent from their properties; and how immense a proportion of their incomes, even when they are there, is devoted to objects of luxury which the towns alone produce. It may safely be

* Ante I. 47, and Appendix, No. II.

affirmed, that this habit is the first appearance of gray hairs on the British empire.

The vast population, profligate habits, and rapid increase of our great cities, is evidently the cause which is overwhelming the population of the empire. The old saying, that "God made the country, but man made the town," contains more political truth than those are aware who have not studied the cause of national decline. The pristine condition of the human race has not altered: it is in the "cities of the plain" that profligacy and corruption are first engendered. Amidst the vast multitudes and squalid dwellings of these great hot-beds of corruption, vice is encouraged by the prospect of impunity, weakness is seduced by the force of example, and virtue is overwhelmed by the obscurity in which it is buried. Of the existing wickedness in the nation four-fifths has emanated from our great cities.

2. The remarkable and unprecedented growth of our manufacturing industry is another cause which has contributed in a powerful manner to the formation of a diseased and dangerous population.

The advantages of a singularly fortunate geographical position, of a race of seamen, whom a stormy coast has trained to the utmost skill in nautical practice, and of a political constitution which has for many hundred years diffused the blessings of civil liberty, have contributed in a most extraordinary degree to form in these islands a nursery for manufacturing industry. We possess coal and iron mines to an extent beyond any other people: and the hardihood and skill of our seamen have given us a colonial empire unparalleled for extent and splendour in any age in the world. It

is this colonial empire which is the great source of our manufacturing greatness. Out of L.53,000,000, of which the exports of the empire consisted in 1838, L. 25,000,000, or nearly a-half, went to our own colonies, and L. 27,000,000 to all the rest of the world.* The unprecedented growth of this colonial empire during the last thirty years has contributed, in a most surprising manner, to the formation of immense masses of manufacturers in the heart of the empire. Great Britain is to be regarded now as a great workshop, which diffuses its fabrics equally over the frozen and the torrid zone; which clothes alike the negroes of the West Indies, the labourers of Hindostan, the free settlers in Canada, the vine-growers of the Cape, and the sheep-owners of New Holland and Van Diemen's Land. The rapid increase of the human race in these advanced posts of civilisation sustains and vivifies our empire, notwithstanding all the burdens consequent on our political situation, and, in spite of the prodigious increase in the powers of machinery, has called into being an enormous and perilous manufacturing population.

It has been the well-known policy of Great Britain for the last century and a-half to encourage, by every means in their power, the manufacturing industry of their people, and this policy ably and steadily pursued, and accompanied with the advantages of our coal, insular situation, and free constitution, have produced the immense results over which, in one view, we have reason to exult, and in another to lament. It is utterly impossible that this unparalleled growth of our manufacturing industry can co-exist with the firm foundation

* Porter's Parl. Tables, vii. 168, and Parl. Paper, 27th May 1840.

of public prosperity. Its obvious tendency is to create immense wealth in one part of the population, and increased numbers in another; to coin gold for the master manufacturer, and multiply children in his cotton-mills; to exhibit a flattering increase in the exports and imports of the empire, and an augmentation as appalling in its paupers, its depravity, and its crimes.

It is in the midst of this prodigious manufacturing population that the human race advances with alarming rapidity, and shoals of human beings are ushered into the world, without any adequate provision existing for their comfortable maintenance. Such is the improvidence, the recklessness, and the profligacy which characterize the great bulk of the urban population in all the great cities of the empire, that the rate of increase bears no proportion to the permanent demand for labour: but mankind go on multiplying as in the Irish hovels, with hardly any other limit than that arising from the physical inability in the one sex to procreate, and in the other to bear children. Such is their improvidence, that months of suffering do as little to improve their habits as years of prosperity to better their condition. Through all the vicissitudes of fortune, and all the terrible changes of manufacturing industry, one incessant accumulation of the species goes forward. In seasons of plenty they lay by nothing; in periods of adversity, they learn as little wisdom. The multitudes of children find a rapid and steady employment from 9 to 16 years of age in the great manufactories, which renders them not merely nowise burdensome, but a positive source of income to their parents in those tender years; and when they

arrive at the age of manhood, they too often find that the period of their occupation is gone, and that they are thrown upon the world without any means whatever of earning a livelihood. Meanwhile their habits have been ruined, their tastes vitiated, their morals corrupted; the girls have lost their chastity, the boys their integrity; and from the one flows the immense stream of prostitution which covers the streets; from the other, the appalling increase of crime which overwhelms the calendar.

3. The circumstances now mentioned may be considered as arising unavoidably from the political situation and natural progress of the country; but besides these, there are other causes of an adventitious character which are now pressing with marked severity upon the labouring classes both of France and England.

The demand for human beings unquestionably regulates in the end their supply; but there is this difference between their production and that of merchandize, that the latter can be produced, and are completed within a few months after they are wanted; whereas twenty years must elapse before the former come into full activity, and they subsist for forty years more. This circumstance, which has never been sufficiently attended to, is probably the chief cause of the extraordinary difficulties which have fallen upon the labouring classes within these few years, at a time when the general situation of the empire gave no token of any peculiar causes of suffering being in operation.

It is stated by Savary, that the conscription, which affected young men from 18 to 19 years of age, continued perfectly productive till 1811, when it *suddenly ceased* to produce any soldiers, and the Emperor, in

order to fill his ranks, was compelled to draw from the older classes, and ultimately embrace every one from 20 to 40.* The cause of this extraordinary and alarming deficiency was not at first perceived; but a little reflection showed the French statesmen that it occurred because the conscription then, for the first time, touched the sons of those who should have been married in the year 1792 and 1793; the years of the commencement of the war, when above a million of Frenchmen perished of disease and the sword. Ever after the conscription of the youth of the legal age from 18 to 20, proved entirely unproductive, because it advanced in the succeeding years into the sons of those married in 1794, 1795, and 1796, and, of course, the produce of the marriages of those years, were scanty in proportion to the desolating wars which had thinned their fathers' contemporaries.

It is the converse of this curious fact, that both France and England have experienced for the last twenty years, and to which their increasing difficulties during that period have been in a great degree owing. The demand for labour during the war, especially from 1808 to 1814, when above a million of men in the prime of life were constantly employed by Government in the army and navy, led to a very great impulse to population during those years. Every body remembers, who is old enough to recollect those times, that professional success, in every walk of life, was a matter of comparative ease to what it is now. The expenditure of L.80,000,000, L.100,000,000, and L.120,000,000 a-year by Government, gave such an impetus to every branch of industry, that in all walks of

* Savary, Memoirs, viii. 117, 124.

life the acquisition of subsistence was within reach, in many the making of a competence or fortune was with tolerable abilities a matter of probability. The effect of this immense addition to the demand for labour, of course, appeared in the rapid increase of population, which advanced with extraordinary rapidity during those years. Accordingly, the returns from the agricultural counties show from 1801 to 1811, an increase of 9 per cent.; from 1811 to 1821, of 10⅓; and from 1821 to 1831, of only 7. It is probable, that, from 1831 to 1841, the increase will be only 6 or 7 in the rural districts, as the diminished marriages contracted during the late years of depression will thus tell upon the rate of increase.*

One great cause, therefore, of the difficulties of the labouring classes has been, that now, for the first time, the produce of the increased marriages during the latter years of the war have come into the field of labour, and affected the employment of the whole population. Prior to 1830, the young people did not, in any considerable degree, affect the labour of the country, though they were numbered among its inhabitants; but now they have arrived at that period of life, when they engage in laborious industry and jostle others out of employment. In these times, therefore, we are suffering under the consequences of the vast expenditure and boundless encouragement to industry during the war; and a generation must expire before our children, in their turn, experience the benefits arising from the diminished impulse to labour under which we at present suffer.

Unfortunately, the extraordinary and diseased in-

* Appendix, No. IV.

crease of manufactures amongst us renders it hopeless, that amongst that class any thing approaching to an adaptation of the increase of mankind to the permanent means of their employment can take place. The rate of increase in our manufacturing counties has been greater in the last ten years than it was during any period of the war; the proportion being from 1801 to 1811, $16\frac{3}{4}$; from 1811 to 1821, $14\frac{1}{3}$; and from 1821 to 1831, $18\frac{1}{3}$. This fact, while it strikingly indicates the peril to the nation which arises from its manufacturing establishments, shows at the same time how little distress or suffering diminishes the rate of increase among that heedless and inconsiderate part of society, and how vast a burden they are creating for the nation, if any external events should ever close or materially obstruct the present outlets to our manufacturing industry.*

4. The vast expenditure of the war has affected the condition of our labouring poor still more seriously, by destroying, by the very act which created the demand for labour, a great part of the funds for its future support. This subject is one of the most vital importance; and though it has already been touched on, † yet it deserves, in reference to Great Britain, a more serious consideration.

In the ordinary employments of human industry, the same demand for labour which calls mankind into existence creates a fund for their future and comfortable maintenance. The agriculturist who employs workmen in clearing or improving his land, creates a fund for the future support of the species in the produce which rewards his labour, and the improved

* Appendix, No. IV. † Ante, I. 166.

condition of the soil which results from his exertions. The merchant or manufacturer who employs a multitude of hands, if he does not so clearly augment the source of future wealth, at least creates property equal to the labour he employs in the produce of his manufacture, which enriches himself and all his workmen. But the case is totally different with money expended in foreign loans, continental wars, or the payment of the army and navy, which does not *reproduce itself*, but encourages industry which makes *no provision* for the support of the species in future times. This is a most important distinction. Many of the ordinary professions of life do not produce any permanent addition to human subsistence or wealth; and if they bear their due proportion to such as do, no mischief to society arises; but when a great amount of the earnings of a nation is annually taken away in the shape of taxes or loans, and employed in wholly unproductive channels, the consequences must ultimately be a great disproportion between the means of employment and the numbers of mankind.

Three hundred and thirty-three millions, according to Mr Canning, were expended in the war in Spain; and if to the sums raised by loan during the war are added the immense amount of the annual taxes, it will not appear extravagant to assert, that probably little short of a *thousand millions* were laid out during the war in foreign states, or in a form in this country which did not reproduce itself, and contributed nothing to the creation of funds for the future support of industry. The effects of this vast expenditure in such a direction have been in the highest degree important. By turning so great a proportion of the

public wealth from a productive into an unproductive channel,—by giving the greatest stimulus to population, at the very time that so large a portion of the funds for the maintenance of labour were not only receiving no increase, but undergoing a rapid diminution, the inhabitants of the country have been rendered altogether disproportioned to the means of their employment. Had this wealth not been violently torn up and poured out into these unproductive channels, a large proportion of it at least would have been devoted to employment which reproduced itself, instead of being lost in purposes which left behind them only a sterile load of debt. The encouragement to population would have been much less; the *temporary* stimulus to industry more inconsiderable; but the augmentation of the funds for the maintenance of labour would have been much greater; the channels of useful industry far wider; and the means of absorbing the labouring classes in profitable employment incomparably more abundant.

This observation furnishes the true solution of that singular anomaly in our political condition which has been so often observed, and which is perhaps unexampled in the past history of the world, viz. that the state contains immense masses of capital which cannot find employment, and of labourers who cannot obtain work, and yet that these two superfluities are unable to aid each other. The reason is, that the vast expenditure of capital in an unproductive form during the war, has prevented the formation of those channels by which the communication might have been effected. Capital which is spent in such a way works out no vent for human labour; it furnishes

no materials for the future support or employment of mankind; it simply promotes industry for the time, not only without adding to, but by positively subtracting from, the funds for its future maintenance. Capital laid out in a form which reproduces itself, as in agriculture, manufactures, or commerce, not only encourages industry at the moment, but at the same time augments the funds for its future support. The one resembles the spendthrift, who squanders his substance in riotous living, dogs, horses, or carriages; the other the prudent husbandman, or enterprising merchant, who, by engaging only in useful or profitable undertakings, finds himself at the end of a course of years, not only nowise impoverished, but positively enriched by all that he has expended.

It never was the intention of Nature that *all* the wealth of a nation should be employed in a productive form, any more than that all the expenditure of an individual should be limited to mere articles of necessity. A certain proportion must be devoted to employment which does not reproduce itself, from the tastes, the necessities, and the inclinations of men. Nations must have fleets and armies, and occasionally foreign loans, just as individuals must have lawyers, physicians, painters, and opera dancers, as well as butchers and bakers. It is the *undue excess* of the one which ruins individuals,—it is the same excess of the other which disorganizes and distresses nations. England has not suffered for twenty-five years, because she had a war with France, and maintained fleets and armies; but because she was driven by necessity into a war of such extraordinary length and

expense, as gave a forced and unprofitable direction to above a third of her national capital.*

5. Great Britain, during a period when she was afflicted by so many causes which tended to destroy the healthful equilibrium between population and the means of its employment, has had to contend with an inundation of pauperism from the neighbouring island, unparalleled, it is believed, in the history of the world.

Humboldt, the accuracy and extent of whose political as well as his physical researches is so well known, was the first, as already noticed, who brought to light the extraordinary and almost incredible fact, that the increase in the population of Great Britain from 1801 to 1821, was a *million greater* than the comparative returns of births and deaths exhibited; in other words, that an addition to that vast amount was made to its numbers within that period from a foreign source.† What this foreign source is can be no matter of doubt to any inhabitant of these islands. The immense annual immigration from Ireland is the chief cause which weighs down the British poor. According to Humboldt's calculation, 50,000 Irish annually settle in this island; and if it is recollected that the greater part of these are persons in the prime of life, and ready to become the parents of families, it may readily be conceived what an enormous addition this must have made to the population of Great Britain. Such, indeed, has been its magnitude, that all the other sources of suffering to the poor are insignificant

* The debt of the nation is L.750,000,000; the sum of the national property is estimated by Colquhoun at L.2,400,000,000.

† Humboldt's Voyages, xi. 217, 224.

in comparison; and repeated committees of the House of Commons, who investigated some years ago the national distress, reported with truth, that there was no tendency to undue increase among the *native* poor of Great Britain, and that, if the formidable competition of Irish settlers could be withdrawn, all who remain would be maintained in comparative ease and comfort.

This enormous evil stares us in the face wherever we turn, and obstructs whatever plans are thought of for the relief of distress. Assuming Humboldt's calculation to be well founded, and the influx to have continued at the same rate for the last ten years, there has settled in this country during the last thirty years 1,500,000 Irish, almost all in the most needy and destitute circumstances. This is nearly *a third* of the whole increase of the island, as evinced by the population returns. Can there be the smallest doubt that this immense foreign swarm has been the main source of the extraordinary distress which, for the last fifteen years, has prevailed among our labouring poor? It is the last drop which makes the cup of misery overflow; and, considering that the Irish have been so immense a drop, it is no wonder that it is running over in torrents.

In every great town in the empire the excessive multiplication of Irish presents itself as an evil of the very greatest magnitude. Their numbers are nearly as follows.*

Now when it is recollected that these immense bodies of men are almost entirely destitute when they cross

* London, - 120,000
Manchester, - 38,000
Glasgow, - 40,000
Liverpool, - 34,000
Edinburgh, - 29,000
Bristol, - 24,000

the Channel; that they are generally all engaged in the lowest and humblest species of labour; that few of them add anything permanently to the wealth of the country, upon whose charity and labour they form so heavy a burden; and that they barely maintain themselves while actually in employment,—it may easily be imagined, that all measures for the relief of the British poor must prove unavailing, which do not commence with laying the axe to the root of this formidable invasion on the western marches. The production of the human race in Ireland seems to proceed with inexhaustible vigour. Famines, suffering, distress, misery, constitute no sort of obstruction to it; and those restraints which might be expected to arise in the progress of society from the increasing comforts and artificial wants of the people themselves, are effectually prevented from coming into operation by the wild and revengeful passions of its unhappy and too often guilty population.

6. The *Factory System*, and its natural appendage, trades' unions and strikes among workmen, must be enumerated among the most prominent causes of the present diseased action of the principle of population in Great Britain.

Whether the factory system, that is, the employment of girls or boys, from ten to eighteen years of age, to perform the chief manual operations in the larger manufacturing establishments, is a necessary part of such seminaries of industry, or whether they will in process of time be superseded by some other and more healthful arrangement, salutary alike to the moral and physical frame of their inmates, is not yet ascertained. But at present it may be affirmed without hesitation, that the system of employing children

of that description in these great establishments, is the most ruinous to the moral character and habits of increase in a nation, that human ingenuity ever yet devised; and that, if either experience does not discover some remedy for these evils, or Nature in some way to us inscrutable does not work out its own cure, the empire will in the end be overturned by their effect.

It is hard to say whether this system is most destructive to the young employed in the factories, to their parents, or to the general habits and rate of increase of the lower orders. The young, torn at a tender age from the endearments, the duties, and the discipline of home, are thrown, while yet children, into the atmosphere of hot rooms, where their health is undermined by excessive labour, and their morals speedily give way amidst the profligacy with which they are surrounded. The parents find a precocious and deplorable profit in the earnings of their infant offspring; while yet in the prime of life they are enabled to withdraw in a great degree from labour, and drag out a few years of indolent existence, to which spirits or dissipation form the only excitement; and during which they bestow hardly any care on their offspring, but to impel them to the early and severe toil by which, at the expense of their bodies and souls, this cursed profit is secured to themselves. The strongest impulse is thus given to a diseased and frightful increase of population; the habits of the working classes of both sexes run into incessant sensual enjoyment; early marriages, or more frequently early bastards, are universal; and such of the youth of either sex as have survived their apprenticeship to manufacturing skill and moral depravity, find at the age of thirty, that they can subsist on the earnings of their children; and

as the avenue of employment to adults is in a great measure closed by this premature work of their offspring, they fall into the indolent habits or drunken ways of their parents, and make way for others in the same fatal round of precocious labour, premature passion, and untimely decay. Hence the innumerable children which are always to be seen on the streets of manufacturing towns or villages, and the extremely short period to which human life is extended among operatives of either sex of maturer years, and the great numbers of them who at that period find their way into the hospital, the workhouse, or the lunatic asylum.

A natural appendage to this melancholy state of things is the system of trades' unions and strikes among workmen, by which additional insecurity and uncertainty is introduced into employments already too subject to commercial vicissitudes, and the evils of universal penury and compulsory idleness are periodically entailed upon hundreds of thousands among the people. Imagination itself can hardly figure the evils which this disastrous system brings upon the poor. Independent of the immense loss which they entail upon the manufacturing community,* and, which is the more severely felt, that they reduce thirty or forty thousand human beings at once to a state of destitution, which often lasts for months

* The great strike of the calico-printers in Lanarkshire, in 1834, occasioned a loss to the community of at least L.600,000; that of the cotton-spinners at Glasgow, in 1837, which lasted four months, of L.550,000; that of the Lanarkshire colliers and miners, in the same year, which lasted five months, of L.800,000; and that of the spinners at Preston in Lancashire, in 1835, of L. 107,196.—See Statistical Magazine for November 1837, p. 87, and Evidence before Combination Committee, 1838, 151, 271.

together, who are so utterly improvident, that they have made no sort of provision for such a calamity; they produce a more lasting and pernicious effect in the total feeling of insecurity which they engender among all persons engaged in such employments. No one can tell how soon he may be compelled, by the mandates of an arbitrary committee, who enforce their commands by contumely, assault, and, if necessary, assassination, to suspend working, and remain for months together in a state of forced idleness, for the sake of a struggle to achieve the hopeless object of keeping wages up in a season of adversity, at the level they have attained in a previous period of prosperity. Great numbers of those thus loosened from work fall into habits of thieving, drunkenness, or prostitution, from which they never recover; and hence the marked increase of crime which invariably six months or a year after a great strike overloads the calendar.* But a still more serious, and, with reference to population, irreparable effect, is the general feeling of insecurity which it necessarily spreads among the operatives of either sex subject to such tyranny; and the fatal disposition to merge care in present and sensual enjoyment, to which their previous habits have rendered them already too much

* Committals in Lanarkshire for serious crimes:

	1836, -	401
Strike	1837, -	451
	1838, -	555
	1839, -	606

—Parl. Reports on Crime for these years. The strike of 1837 kept at least 40,000 idle and on the verge of starvation for above four months; and hence the dreadful mortality of that year, during which 23,000 persons in Glasgow were seized with typhus fever, and the annual mortality sunk to 1 in 24.

inclined, and which tend at once to produce a numerous, miserable, and redundant mass of inhabitants.

7. The rapid augmentation of population in the British empire, which is now doubling in forty-two years, —a rate of increase unparalleled in an old state,—has completely outstripped all the means of moral or religious information afforded to the people; and spread such habits among a large portion of them, as render moral improvement almost hopeless. The church establishment perhaps was adequate, but barely so, at the beginning of the century; but since that time the people have nearly *doubled*. Has a corresponding increase been made in the means of their religious tuition? Experience has made it but too evident that this vital duty has been fatally neglected; and that, in the midst of a Christian land, we have nursed up a race of men so utterly destitute of all information on moral duty or religious truth, that the like of it was never seen in any heathen state.

The constant employment of the young in manufactories for fourteen hours a day, renders it almost impossible for any education to do them much good; for who after such a period of daily toil could sit down to the additional labour of learning anything? It is almost barbarity to propose it. The only relief to the poor children is to send them to their beds. This deplorable state of matters cannot be remedied by voluntary charity, or even the unwearied exertions of the benevolent; they have been strained to the uttermost, and found wholly unequal to the task. Nothing but the strong hand of Government, and an assessment reaching the vast funds of the selfish and indifferent, as well as the humane, is adequate to the remedy of the evil. Whether such a task will ever be under-

taken by the Legislature, or submitted to by the country, may be doubted; but this may be affirmed without hesitation, that, if this great duty is not discharged, and that, too, without delay, by the nation, the seeds of ruin are, by the laws of God, sown, and justly sown in the community; and that such will be the depravity and wretchedness of the people on whom the visitation will fall, that even Timour, with his pyramids of ninety thousand heads, would be deemed a messenger of mercy to mankind.

8. The total want of poor's rates, or any legal provision whatever for the indigent in great part of Scotland, and the miserably parsimonious spirit in which they have been administered, even where necessity has forced their adoption, must be reckoned in the foremost rank of the many evils which have now induced a diseased action of the principle of population in a large portion of society. Extensive inquiries have now ascertained the lamentable fact, that there are at least 250,000 human beings in Scotland—nearly a tenth of the existing population—who are in a state of almost total destitution, and are permanently retained in that state by the obstinate resistance which the affluent classes make in many places to any assessment, at all,—in all, to any adequate assessment for their relief.* The paupers of Scotland are in fact just as numerous, or more so in proportion to the whole numbers of the people, as those in England There is only this difference between them, that

* Viz. In Glasgow, - - 20,000
Edinburgh, - - 15,000
Aberdeen, - - 6,000
Dundee and other towns, 5,000
Highlands and Islands, 200,000
251,000

—See Alison's Reply, p. 19, 28.

those to the south of the Tweed are, comparatively speaking, comfortably maintained; while those to the north of it are allowed to pine and waste in obscurity, until their misery attracts the casual and too often fleeting notice of the benevolent.

Even when relief is administered, it is done in so extremely economical, or rather niggardly a spirit, that it has no sensible effect in arresting the evils of pauperism, or checking the stream of redundant population, which is in consequence flowing over the land. The board given to paupers is so small, that, though it supports life, it does so only in the lowest possible grade, and consequently, without really assuaging present distress, permanently lowers the habits of the people. Yet such as it is,* it is gladly accepted by hundreds and thousands, who flock there from the Highlands and Islands, to avoid the utter starvation which awaits them in those mountain districts, where no relief whatever is afforded. Nothing can be expected from the permanent and habitual retention of

* In Glasgow, which is a fair specimen of the Scotch system, the out-door aid allowed is generally from one to two shillings a week; and even where a total board is indispensable, it is only 14s. *a month*, or a fraction above *5d. a day*—a pittance on which, in that opulent community, where the necessaries of life are all extremely high, can only support existence in the most wretched state. Numbers of poor persons are boarded at this rate in lodging-houses in the Barony parish, where the misery and squalid destitution exceed what could be credited by those who have not witnessed it. Yet the heritors in Glasgow levy a heavy tax on the community, which amounts to about L. 20,000 annually; and the utmost efforts are made by the affluent classes to relieve the destitute. The real evil lies in the large proportion of Scotland over which the existing system of voluntary assessment has permitted the land-owners to shake themselves loose altogether of the great Christian duty of succouring the unfortunate, and in consequence throw them in overwhelming multitudes on the great towns; where that duty is, however, imperfectly performed.

so large a portion of the community in such a state of deplorable destitution, but a diseased and wholly unrestrained action of the principle of increase, and a general and progressive deterioration of their habits, and depravation of their morals. These effects, accordingly, have very generally taken place; and though unattended to by superficial observers, or those who took from books their accounts of the Scottish poor, they have been long familiar to those who were practically acquainted with their situation. While the great majority of the Scotch proprietors were congratulating themselves upon their happy exemption from the burden of poor's rates which pressed so heavily on their neighbours in England, and fondly dreaming of the moral habits and general felicity of the peasantry on their estates, the criminal records have exhibited an increase of crime during the last thirty years unparalleled in any other state of Europe; * and the researches of unwearied philanthropy have brought to light a mass of indigence and suffering in its great towns and Highland districts,† which, to say the least of it, is a disgrace to any Christian community, and cannot remain long unrelieved without overspreading the land with the want, the crimes, and the insecurity of Ireland.

Is then the condition of the human race in these islands utterly desperate? Can nothing be done to relieve the distresses which press with such severity upon, and have given such an undue tendency to in-

* Serious crime has increased *forty-fold* over all Scotland in the last thirty years. Vide infra, II. 317, and authorities there quoted.

† Vide Dr Alison on the Management of the Poor in Scotland, and Reply to Mr Monypenny; Dr Cowan's Vital Statistics of Glasgow; and Baird and Fullerton on the Poor in the Western Islands and Highlands of Scotland.

crease to the poor? and must we sit down in hopeless despair, under the grievous spectacle of multitudes starving in the midst of plenty?

The answer is, that this is not necessary; that the British empire contains within itself abundant resources for feeding its numerous offspring; that immense and fertile districts exist, capable of maintaining with ease an hundred times the inhabitants of these islands; that the growth of these distant possessions is only retarded by the impossibility of finding hands to satisfy their insatiable demand for labour; that the multitudes of destitute labourers who now oppress our industry, would be as great an acquisition to them, as their removal would be a relief to ourselves; and that adequate means exist for transporting the living swarm across the ocean, and rearing up in transatlantic wilds, boundless markets for the industry of the heart of the empire.

Nor is there any chance of this prodigious opening for labour in Australia and our North American Colonies being either diminished or lost to this country, except by the folly of internal legislation. The productive land in Canada and New Holland exceeds that of all Europe put together: it is so intersected by water through the great chain of the lakes, which flows through its centre, that hardly any part of it is fifty miles from inland navigation, and an immense tract lies on the shores of vast navigable rivers or stupendous inland seas. The climate, severe in Lower, is much more mild in Upper Canada; the vine, the maize, the apricot, peach, and nectarine ripen in the open air. The soil is so rich from the falling of leaves during many thousand winters, that it bears the finest wheat crops for three years without manure.

The invention of steam has facilitated indefinitely both the means of getting at this fertile district, and the market for its produce when cultivation has commenced. Nothing is wanted but *hands* to clear the vast tracts of wood-encumbered plains; and that is precisely what England possesses to superfluity!

It would seem, therefore, as if the bounty and goodness of Providence was about to confound our short-sighted repinings at the unequal proportion of population and subsistence, by a lavish distribution of its bounty, unknown to any former age of the world. This little island in the Atlantic possesses under its sway, tracts of boundless extent and inexhaustible fertility, teeming with the riches of a virgin soil, and loaded with the wealth of primeval vegetation. Continents larger than the Roman empire contained in the zenith of its power, lie waste and uncultivated under our dominions, waiting only for the patient hand of industry to unfold their treasures, and ready to start into life under the animating exertions of healthful enterprise.

Sir Walter Raleigh said, that in the isthmus of Darien he would wrest the keys of the world from Spain. With more truth it may be anticipated, that the keys of the western world will be found in the St Lawrence, as those of the eastern have long been in the Nile and the Red Sea. The possibility of a water navigation through the chain of lakes to the Columbia river, with a very slight interruption, is now ascertained. The dreams of a north west-passage are about to be realized, and realized by a channel passing through the British dominions!

The omnipotent navy, and immense commercial

shipping of England, seem destined by Nature to insure and protect the constant communication between the centre and the distant parts of our empire. Steam navigation has come into activity precisely at the time it was required to unite distant hemispheres, abridge oceans, and pour out upon the solitary forests of the New World, the vast population and moral energy of the old. If circumstances could be imagined more than any other favourable to the diffusion of our redundant domestic population over our boundless colonial possessions, they are precisely those in which we are now placed.

Even at home, among so many causes for anxiety and disquietude in surveying the present condition of the labouring poor in the British empire, some streaks of light are beginning to appear in the horizon, and political danger promises to second the efforts of benevolence, in forcibly directing the national attention to the means of arresting them. It is forgetfulness of the poor to which we owe almost all our present dangers; it is in attention to them that the remedy is to be found. Philosophic indifference was the principle which perverted the mind of the nation in this vital particular in the last generation; the only cure for it is to be drawn from RELIGIOUS ZEAL and CHRISTIAN CHARITY in the present. It is in that noble principle not merely animating individuals, but directing the Legislature, which is the true foundation of national security. Already the commencement of a change is conspicuous; and we may see how powerfully the efforts of the leaders in this great work are seconded by the eternal laws of Nature. The eloquence of an Ashley might have toiled unnoticed for years in exposing the manifold evils of the factory system; the fervour of

a Chalmers laboured in vain to rouse a selfish generation to the paramount duty of Church Extension; the philanthropy of an Alison* fruitlessly contended with the ignorant impatience of taxation in mankind, in behalf of the destitute poor of his country; but when the evils of the humbler classes wrought out their natural and inevitable effect in multiplying beyond measure their numbers, and endangering from their pressure and wickedness all the institutions of society; when the torch of the Chartist was to be seen in our cities, and the conflagration of the incendiary in our fields, the mind of the nation righted itself, and a sense of apprehension gave force to the suggestions of benevolence and weight to the dictates of wisdom. And herein we may discern the design of Providence in that vehement action to the principle of population, which is consequent on general suffering among the poorer classes of society, and which at first sight appears so strange a provision and disastrous a tendency in human affairs. It was to give weight to the injured class, to draw attention to their sufferings, to make the force of numbers counterbalance the power of property, and compel a remedy for existing evils, if not from the virtues, at least from the fears of the higher classes, that this terrible expansive power was given to the lower; and their redundancy in population, itself apparently the most serious, because the most incurable evil which can afflict society, is found to be the means employed by Nature, like the swelling of a limb into which poisonous or irritating matter has been introduced, for expelling the destructive substance from the frame of society.

* On the Management of the Poor in Scotland, by Dr Alison. Edinburgh, 1840.

CHAPTER IX.

ACTION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF INCREASE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

ARGUMENT.

Vast extent and boundless capacity of the American Continent—Extraordinary vigour and animation of the Anglo-American race—Its rapid progress—Causes of that advance—Influence of the Democratic spirit in producing it—General well-being and yet discontented condition of the American population—Reflections on the probable future rate of its increase, and the ultimate destinies of that part of the world.

INCOMPARABLY inferior to the Continent of Europe, in the number and variety of the political institutions which it exhibits, the United States of America display an example of human increase, and of the powers of population, in extending over a boundless surface of fertile land, unparalleled in the past history of the globe. Since the period when the Puritan fathers of a New World first landed in 1640, on the coasts of Pennsylvania, down to the present time, the British race has never ceased to double in every twenty-three years and a half; and this astonishing rate of increase appears to continue with unabated vigour at the present moment.* The consequence has been, that the descendants of the Anglo-Saxon race in the United States are probably now nearly fourteen millions.† This is in-

* Tocqueville, ii. 372.

† In 1790, they were 3,929,128; in 1830, 12,856,165.—Tocqueville, 370.

dependent of about 3,500,000 black slaves who now perform the work of cultivation in the southern states, and who, which is very remarkable, have been found for a great many years past, to be increasing at even a more rapid rate than the white population by whom they are surrounded;* and although this surprising effect is partly owing to the continued influx of blacks into the southern states from those states in the north and west, where slavery is either abolished or discouraged; yet there can be no doubt that the sable race is multiplying at least as fast in those countries, where it still continues, as in the European; and in 1830, in the states where slavery was tolerated, the proportion was 3,960,000 whites, and 2,208,000 blacks. But from the great increase now in the latter race, there is reason to believe that their total number now in America is not less than 3,000,000.*

Prodigious and unparalleled as this rate of increase of population has been in so short a time, it is far less than the growth of mankind in particular parts of this highly favoured quarter of the globe. In the valley of the Mississippi, which is by far the richest part of America, and which contains above 1,000,000 square geographical miles, or about fourteen times the area of the British islands, the population has multiplied in the last forty years thirty-one fold, while dur-

* The blacks in the southern states are increasing in proportion to the whites, in the following ratio:

From 1790 to 1830, Whites increased in proportion of 80 to 100
Blacks, - - - - 100 to 112

* Carey's Letters on the Colonization Society, 1833; and Tocqueville, ii. 239.

† Tocqueville, ii. 329.

ing the same period, the numbers of the whole American provinces have only tripled. This is probably the most extraordinary and well authenticated instance of human increase on record in the world; but it is far beyond the powers of multiplication which mankind possess from their own unaided resources, and is mainly to be ascribed to the vast influx of immigrants both from the States of the Union on the shores of the Atlantic, and the more distant British islands. The number of persons who annually settle in the United States of America, from Great Britain and Ireland, is at present, as ascertained from authentic documents, not less than 100,000. And almost the whole of this vast multitude no sooner arrive on the shores of America, than they crowd away to the back settlements, and swell the prodigious flood of civilisation which is overspreading the banks of the Ohio. To these are added a still greater stream of immigration from America itself; for clearly marked as the tendency of emigration is from Europe, and especially from the British islands to the American shores, it operates not less forcibly in directing mankind from the shores of the Atlantic across the Alleghany mountains, into the vast and untrodden solitudes of the west. Such has been the growth of the human species in that fertile territory, which, both from its extent and riches, may truly be called the garden of the world, that the States, in that great alluvial surface, though they only began to be seriously cultivated in 1790, now contain above five millions of inhabitants; and it has become no longer a matter of doubt, that in less than thirty years, its

inhabitants, from their great increase, will have a preponderating voice in the national Legislature.*

There is something solemn and almost awful in the incessant advance of the great stream of civilisation, which in America is continually rolling down from the summit of the Alleghany mountains, and overspreading the boundless forests of the Far West. Nothing similar ever was witnessed in the world before. Vast as were the savage multitudes which ambition or lust of plunder in Gengiskhan or Timour brought down from the plains of Tartary to overwhelm the opulent regions of the earth, they are as nothing compared to the ceaseless flood of human beings which is now in its turn sent forth from the abodes of civilized man into the desert parts of the world. Not less than three hundred thousand persons, almost all in the prime of life, now yearly cross the Alleghany mountains, and settle on the banks of the Ohio or its tributary streams. They do not merely pass through like a devastating fire or a raging torrent; they settle where they take up their abode, never to return. Their war is with the forest and the marsh, not against the corrupted cities of long-established man. Spreading themselves out over an extent nearly twelve hundred miles in length, these advanced posts of civilisation commence the incessant war with the plough and the hatchet, and at the sound of their strokes resounding through the solitude of the forest, the wild animals and the Indians retire to more undisturbed retreats. Along a tract of nearly twelve hundred miles in length, the average advance of cultiva-

* Tocqueville, ii. 376. Chevalier, i. 387.

tion is about seventeen miles a-year. The ground is imperfectly cleared, indeed, by these pioneers of humanity; but still the forest has disappeared under their strokes; the green field, the wooden cottage, the signs of infant improvement have appeared; and behind them, another wave of more wealthy and refined settlers appear, who complete the work of agricultural advancement. The wild animals of the forest retire before this incessant advance of civilisation; by a mysterious instinct, or the information of other animals of their race, they become aware of the approach of the great enemy of their tribe; and so far does the alarm penetrate, that they are frequently found to commence their retreat two hundred miles in advance of the actual sound of the European hatchet.*

The violence of the impulse which thus impels this astonishing torrent of the European race into the western solitudes, appears in the strongest manner in all the public conveyances which transport passengers to these distant regions. Thousands and tens of thousands every week in summer descend to the margin of the streams which promise them a conveyance to the distant regions of the west, all eager for an immediate passage to the land of promise. Difficulties cannot retard, dangers cannot deter them. With ceaseless activity and persevering courage, they make their way to the first steam-boats that can convey them across to the Ohio, and, without regarding the perils of the passage or the numerous dangers of steam navigation, demand only to be instantly conveyed to the region of their hopes. Such are the

* Tocqueville, ii. 274; Report of Cass and Clarke to Congress, 4th February 1829.

multitudes that flock to these means of transport, that even the sight of a high-pressure steam-engine, blown up before their eyes, has no effect in deterring others from instantly embarking in the perilous navigation. They ask only a cheap passage and a quick voyage. For weeks and months together they crowd to the quays where the steam-boats take their passengers, almost rolling over each other in their anxiety to get forward; no sooner does a boat touch the quay than it is instantly filled with passengers, and with scarcely any money in their pockets, and but little provender in their scrips, the hardy adventurers rush forward into the wilderness before them, and gain from the chase a precarious subsistence, till the first returns of cultivation afford them the means of support.*

Steam navigation is the vital means of communication by which this extraordinary activity is propelled into distant regions. The Ohio and the Mississippi, and the numerous tributary streams which swell their waters, are covered with steam-boats. Above 230 annually ply upon the Mississippi alone; upwards of 500 are employed on the rivers, which convey the vast stream of immigration to the western provinces of the Union. Without this mighty agent, the progress of cultivation and the clearing of the forest must have been comparatively slow; steam navigation is to the great continent of America what the circulation of the blood is to the human frame, and the commercial wealth and paper currency of the great mercantile cities on the shores of the Atlantic, the moving power in the heart which sets the whole circulation in motion.†

The effect of this wonderful immigration and set-

* Chevalier, ii. 23, 24; Tocqueville, ii. 274. † Chevalier, ii. 24, 25.

tling of civilized man, in the fertile but hitherto desert regions of the western world, must, ere long, if it continues, as it apparently will, uninterrupted, produce the most important effects on the prospects and situation of mankind on the globe. Should the inhabitants of the United States advance as rapidly as they have done, they will amount by the year 1900 to a hundred million of souls; and this amount, great as it is, is far within the number which the territory of the United States could comfortably maintain. The valley of the Mississippi alone is seven times as large as France, and incomparably more fertile. If it were as densely inhabited as the territory of France, it would contain not less than 250,000,000 of souls.* There can be no doubt that, long before this period has arrived, the usual causes of retardation which check the multiplication of mankind in the later stages of society, will have come to affect the increase of the inhabitants of all the eastern states of the Union, and of all their long established provinces. But the continual influx of emigrants from the European States, and the incessant anxiety of men to better their fortunes by pressing forward to the unappropriated lands of the west, may possibly, for a century and a-half to come, maintain this rate of increase unabated; and if that be the case, America will then contain as many inhabitants as the whole monarchies of Europe at this time.†

This marvellous rapidity of increase has hitherto not only been unattended with any addition to human suffering, but it has taken its origin rather in the

* Tocqueville, ii. 62, 387.

† Europe now contains 227,000,000 of inhabitants to the westward of the Ural mountains.—Malte Brun.

prodigious extent to which general prosperity has been diffused through all classes of the community. Among the many marvels which strike a European traveller on the first approach to the United States, is the extraordinary well-being which pervades all classes of the community. Although pauperism exists in some of the great towns and long-established states, yet, over the United States generally, the condition of the working classes is prosperous in the extreme. There is scarcely a working man from one end of America to the other, who does not eat butcher's meat at least twice a-day; and such is the demand for labour that everywhere exists, that common workmen universally obtain half a crown, and skilled operatives at least five shillings a-day. There must evidently be something in the character and circumstances of the American race, which has rendered so extraordinary an increase of population coexistent with such universal prosperity. And, accordingly, a very little examination will be sufficient to show, that the condition of the people in the United States varies, in many most essential particulars, from any that ever yet obtained in the habitable globe.

Over the whole of America there is not a single farmer, properly so called, to be found. Every man is the proprietor of the soil which he cultivates.* The agriculturists bear a very great proportion to all the other classes of the community; for in 1820, out of nearly 10,000,000 of inhabitants, there were only 420,000 employed in commerce and manufactures; the whole remainder with their families being occu-

* Tocqueville, iii. 47.

pied in the cultivation of the earth. * America, therefore, in its rural districts, which comprise nine-tenths of its population, is to be regarded as a country of proprietors, and as illustrating, therefore, the vast and unbounded blessings which, in all ages and parts of the world, have been found to attend the acquisition of landed property by the labouring classes. But the most extraordinary circumstance connected with this distribution of landed property among the working classes of America remains to be noticed; and, what is very remarkable, has never yet met with any attention from political philosophers.

The enjoyment of landed property by the labouring classes has been known in every age of the world; and there is no country that does not contain, at least to a certain extent, part of the race of land-owners who cultivate their own soil, in whose multiplication society has everywhere been found to be so deeply interested. But in all these cases the acquisition of landed property has been attended with the strongest possible attachment by the owners of the soil to the little freeholds which they cultivated; and nothing short of the greatest disasters in life has been able to tear mankind up from the seats of their childhood, and the spots on which their own industry and that of their fathers has, from time immemorial, been exerted. Such have been the effects of this feeling in France, that, as Arthur Young† long ago observed, it leads to the retention of heritage by children, even when it amounts only to a single tree; while, in Cey-

* Total Population. Agriculturists. Manufactures. Commerce.
9,638,226 2,170,646 349,506 72,493
—Malte Brun, v. 255.

† Young's France, i. 496.

lon, such is the attachment of the people to the estates of their fathers, that they retain them, even when they amount only, as they do in some cases, to the hundred-and-fiftieth part of a single tree.* That this feeling, so natural and universal in the human heart, exists in the New World, is decisively proved by the curious fact, that the inhabitants of the French race in Canada, who are nearly 500,000 in number, feel it as strongly as their ancestors in Europe; and, instead of spreading out into different and distant lands, remain crowded together in the settlements which they originally acquired two hundred years ago; and which are now nearly as much parcelled out in minute subdivisions among the heirs of the original settlers as in the vine provinces of Old France. †

But in America, for the first time in the history of mankind, this strong and universal feeling seems to be entirely obliterated. Though the American cultivators have derived greater benefits from the soil than any people that ever existed, yet they have no sort of attachment either to the land which they have cultivated, or which they have inherited from their fathers. Not only is landed property almost always sold and divided at the death of the head of the family; but even during his lifetime, immigration from one spot to another is so frequent, that it may be considered as the grand characteristic of the American people. However long and happily a proprietor may have lived upon his little domain, he is always ready to sell it if he can make any profit by the transaction; and putting himself and his family with all his effects on board the first steam-boat,

* Bishop Heber's Travels, ii. 147. † Tocqueville, ii. 204.

transport himself to a different part of the country, and commence, perhaps at the distance of some hundred miles, the great and engrossing work of accumulating money.* This peculiarity is so remarkable, and so totally unknown in any previous period of human history, that it may be considered as the grand characteristic of society in the United States of America; and the present state of that country could not be so well characterized in comparison with that of other countries, as by styling it the NOMAD AGRICULTURAL STATE.

The explanation of this extraordinary peculiarity is unquestionably to be found in the industrial character which the Americans have inherited from their English ancestors, coupled with the effect of democratic institutions on the human mind when society is in a state of universal and rapid progress. That the British race are essentially industrious, need not be told to any one who is at all acquainted with their character, or who is historically impressed with the effects which the wealth created by their exertions has produced on human affairs. But in addition to the active persevering industry which they inherit from their Anglo-Saxon descent, the Americans have received an extraordinary addition to their passion for wealth, from the republican institutions which are so universally and firmly established in their country. The distinctions of birth being wholly unknown in the new world, and the career of industry, opulence, and political importance, open alike to all, every man in the United States perceives that, by industry and activity, he has the prospect, not only of bettering his

* Chevalier, ii. 121, 143; Tocqueville, ii. 121.

condition in the world, but of elevating himself to almost any situation which the country can afford. The effects of this prospect operating continually upon the mind of all classes have been incalculable. They have entirely rooted up the love of home and hereditary possessions, elsewhere so strong in the human heart, and substituted in its room one universal passion for self-elevation, and monied advancement. Hence the prodigious activity which everywhere characterizes the inhabitants of the United States, and the incessant whirl of new undertakings, mercantile speculation, and political agitation, which appear so extraordinary to all but to those who have been habituated to similar appearances in the British islands within the last ten years.*

It results from this circumstance, that employment is universal from the highest to the lowest ranks in the United States. Every man, whatever his fortune may be, must have a profession; the few persons who have not, find themselves so contemptible and unhappy, that they are obliged, in their own defence, to betake themselves, at least, to the semblance of occupation. They are all either buying or selling, cultivating or manufacturing. Wealth being universally felt to be the only passport to either influence, enjoyment, or consideration, it is everywhere sought after with an avidity unknown even in the most commercial states of the old world. Whether this general thirst for money may not in the end essentially degrade the national character may well be doubted: but in the meantime it is attended with the most important effects upon the progress and wealth of population, and,

* Chevalier, ii. 122, 124. Tocqueville, iii. 163, and ii. 203.

by turning the whole energies of the nation to the pursuit of physical enjoyments, adds in a most surprising manner to the accumulation of opulence, and the general sum of material comforts enjoyed by the people.*

It follows also from these circumstances that early marriages are universal in America. There is hardly such a thing to be seen in the whole of the United States, as a man of twenty-one who is not married. Such is the facility of earning a subsistence and finding employment in a comfortable line of life, that the want of a settled occupation or accumulated fortune has not the least effect of preventing persons of either sex from early consulting their inclinations in this particular. For the same reason, the obstacles which a gradation of rank, and the dread of an unsuitable connection, so often interpose between the attachment of the sexes in the Old World, are comparatively little felt in the new. Not but that the human mind evinces there, as everywhere else, the strongest desire to form the gradation of rank, and construct those exclusive circles, and imaginary distinctions, which are embodied into such insuperable barriers in the aristocratic society of Europe;† but that, as these gradations are not of hereditary standing, but are the consequence of wealth

* Chevalier, ii. 123, 124. Tocqueville, iv. 163, iii. 260. Martineau, iii. 40, 41.

† "You can't imagine," said an American girl, the daughter of a milliner, to Miss Martineau, "what a nice set we have at school. 'We never let any of the haberdashers' daughters associate with us.' My informant went on to mention, how anxious she and her set of about sixty young people were to visit *exclusively* among themselves, how 'delightful' it would be to have no grocer's daughters among them, but that was found impossible.'"—Martineau, iii. 33.

which any one may acquire, the barriers to marriage are much less formidable to the young in the United States than in any other part of the world.*

Notwithstanding the general and incessant activity of the Americans, and their thirst for money, capital would be awanting to carry on the immense undertakings which they have set on foot, were it not for the wonderful effects of the system of paper credit which is everywhere established in the United States. This powerful, but perilous, engine of improvement, has been spread to a far greater extent in America than has ever been known even in the British islands. From an inquiry made by Government in January 1834, it appears that, at that period, there were in the United States five hundred and six banking establishments, independent of the National Bank at Philadelphia, and that these private banks had issued notes to the amount of L.16,200,000 Sterling. The notes of the Bank of the United States amounted to L. 3,300,000, making in all a circulation of L.18,500,000, besides about L.10,000,000 in specie. This vast circulation, which is considerably greater in proportion to the wealth and population of the country of that which obtains in the British islands,† is pushed into the farthest extremities of the states of the Union by means of the branch-banks, which, like so many forcing-pumps, disseminate the bank notes through every village and hamlet it contains. The discounting of bills is carried to an unprecedented extent; and the high rate of interest charged, which

* Chevalier, ii. 117.

† The total paper circulation of the United Kingdom is L.42,300,000 sterling, and the total circulation in gold and paper about L.75,000,000. —M'Culloch's Commercial Dictionary.

is often one per cent. a-month, or twelve per cent. a-year, and in periods of commercial difficulties much higher, indemnifies the bankers for the numerous losses they sustain from the bankruptcy of those to whom they make advances. So powerful an agent is this system of paper credit, in forcing and maintaining the industry of the United States, that its influence may be seen in the farthest extremities of their possessions; and it is to the greater advantages they enjoy in this respect, more than any other, that the superior population, wealth, and cultivation of the southern side of the St Lawrence and lakes is to be attributed, to that which appears on the British shores of those noble estuaries.*

The great extent to which the system of paper credit has been carried in the United States has rendered industry in that country liable to a variety of shocks more severe than have ever been experienced by any other community in the globe. These commercial difficulties are of such magnitude that at one blow they prostrate the fortunes of the richest part of the country. During the great crisis of 1837, nearly the whole cotton growers of the southern states at once became insolvent; and in the still more disastrous convulsion of 1839, the whole banks of Philadelphia and the southern states, including the United States Bank, stopped payment; and those of New York avoided such an extremity only by contracting their issues in such a way as spread almost universal bankruptcy among the mercantile classes. Nevertheless, these repeated shocks to credit and industry, which would prove almost fatal to any Euro-

* Chevalier, i. 394.

pean state, are attended only with a temporary depression in America. So boundless are the resources of the country, that no human catastrophes seem to be capable of arresting them; a new race of traders succeeds those in New York or Philadelphia who have been swept away by the tempest; their bills, discounted at 12 per cent., speedily put them on the perilous road to affluence; their predecessors, who had sunk before the storm, are transported by steam-boats to the back settlements, where they speedily enter with exemplary vigour upon the labours of manual cultivation; and the deserts of the Ohio are vivified by a fresh stream of intelligent immigrants, from the effect of those very commercial catastrophes which, to distant spectators, appeared to shake to its centre the whole fabric of industry in the New World.*

The causes which have now been mentioned, joined to the advantages which they have derived from the language, institutions, and laws of Britain, explain the great increase in the population of America, notwithstanding the annual mortality of the country, which is so unhealthy that the deaths are 1 in 37; whereas in England they are 1 in 52, and in France 1 in 41.† It would appear that the vicissitudes of life, of fortune, and the unhealthy occupation of a great part of the people in clearing the woods, tell severely, at least at present, upon the average duration of human life. This circumstance, however, has no effect in diminishing the rate of increase, or in checking the incessant activity which prevails over every part of

* Tocqueville, iv. 149.

† Rickman's Tables. Cleland's Former and Present State of Glasgow, 80.

the country. When the land is more generally cleared, and the primary operations of agriculture completed, the average duration of human life will improve, and the excessive impulse to population will be materially diminished.

Nothing can be more apparent than that society, as it now exists in America, is in a transition state, and that neither the habits in regard to increase, nor the political institutions which now prevail, can for any considerable period remain unchanged among them. The back settlements have hitherto been the great drain which has carried off the turbulent passions and dangerous propensities of the human mind. The basin of the Ohio, capable of maintaining three hundred millions of souls in affluence and comfort, may well retard the advent of dangerous times to a political community. But, notwithstanding this enormous outlet, these dangers are steadily approaching; political passion is more vehement there than even in the European monarchies; the popular cry against the system of paper credit is but the disguise which revolutionary ambition had there assumed; and strange to say, the tyranny of wealth is more loudly complained of in a country where the whole landed property is in the hands of persons who are violently attached to democratic principles, than in any state in modern Europe where it is almost entirely engrossed by an hereditary aristocracy.*

From the habits which prevail among the people, the numerous material comforts to which they have generally been familiarized, and the excessive desire for luxuries and enjoyment with which all classes are

* Tocqueville, i, 203; ii. 9, 10. Chevalier, i, 109, 201.

actuated,* it may with confidence be predicted, that when the numerous outlets for profitable employment which now exist come, as come they will, to be in a great measure closed up, population will advance with very measured strides, and will, sooner than in any other country that now exists, be brought under the dominion of the prudential consideration and artificial wants of the individuals who compose it. In no country in the world is the danger of a redundant population so little to be apprehended. The habit of good living and indulgence of acquired wants will render any tendency to a redundant increase impossible. The same powerful motives which now lead to the rapid increase will then as certainly retard, and ultimately stop, the advance of the species.

There seems little ground for the hope, however, that mankind will continue for centuries to enjoy the same comfort and security which they now possess in the United States. The extraordinary circumstances in which they are placed, that of being thrown into a territory of boundless extent and inexhaustible fertility, with all the powers of civilized life at their command, a continual stream of immigration to augment their numbers, and not in any way within reach to interfere with the progress of their industry, cannot possibly continue for any considerable length of time. Separate interests will arise, and have arisen; democratic passion, which already chafes against all the restraints of law or justice, will find it more profitable to plunder than to create property; the furious popular passions which now find an occasional vent in acts of savage atrocity unknown elsewhere in the

* Tocqueville, iii. 260.

civilized world,* and which the sway of the tyrant majority renders it impossible to punish,† will gradually but certainly induce the curse of civil warfare; the irreconcilable difference of the blacks and whites will involve the Southern States in the horrors of a servile war; and with the gradual removing to a greater distance, or the ultimate closing of the great safety-valve of the Far West, America will become a prey to all the crimes, jealousies, and heart-burnings, national and individual, which elsewhere have been bequeathed with the inheritance of sin to the children of Adam.

Democracy, then, is not the ultimate destiny either of the land of America, or of the human race; it is the pioneer of civilisation but not civilisation itself. Inexhaustible in the vigour and energy which it communicates to the social body; boundless in the force with which it expels civilized man into the desert regions of the earth, it is but a step in the great scheme of human advancement. When the work of clearing the forest is completed, the pioneer of human improvement will be gradually reabsorbed in its ranks. The passions by which democracy is animated, the vehemence by which it is actuated, are too great for the ordinary state of human affairs; it is an agent of incalculable power and importance, but destined only for a transient existence. United to Grecian taste and genius, it spread the refinements of art and the discoveries of science through the ancient world; animating the Roman legions, it subdued the barbarism of ancient

* Such as burning a citizen over a slow fire by the hands of the infuriated populace. Martineau's Society in America, i. 150, 152; ii. 141, 143.

† Tocqueville, ii. 145, 146. Martineau's Retrospect, 207, 208.

manners, and spread the sway of the empire from the shores of the Euphrates to the mountains of Caledonia; engrafted on the British navy it spread the enterprise of commerce and the blessings of civilisation through the habitable globe; impelling the American colonist, it is peopling the New World with the indomitable race of Japhet. For all the great starts in human advancement, Providence draws from the recesses of the human heart, this fiery agent, unequalled for good or for evil, in its action on the fortunes of the species. But such sudden starts or vehement efforts are not the ultimate destiny of mankind, nor is it by them that the greatest felicity and noblest destiny of his being is to be ultimately obtained. It is in a less obtrusive and more tranquil state of mind that the true happiness of man is to be found, and the greatest scope is afforded for his intellectual and moral advancement. The action of such powerful agents is always transient, both in the physical and moral world. It is not in the fiery irruption of the volcano, or the devastating flood of the torrent, that we are to look for the beneficial effects of these mighty agents on the physical world, but in the fertilized field and the flowery vale which ultimately succeed, upon the exhaustion of their fury; it was neither in the thunder nor in the storm that the prophet heard the voice of God, but in the still small voice which succeeded to the fury of the tempest.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

Appendix, No. I. p. 46.

During the thirty years preceding 1831, the inhabitants of Great Britain have increased from 10,940,000 to 16,537,000, or about 50 per cent. The following curious table exhibits the rate of advance during this period:

	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.
England,	8,331,434	9,551,888	11,261,437	13,089,338
Wales,	541,546	611,788	717,438	805,236
Scotland,	1,599,068	1,805,688	2,093,456	2,365,807
Army, &c.	470,598	640,500	319,300	277,017
	10,942,646	12,609,864	14,391,631	16,537,398
				10,942,646
			Increase in thirty years,	5,594,752

Thus, in thirty years, the population has advanced about 5,600,000, or more than 50 per cent. upon its amount at the beginning of that time, being at the rate of 186,000 a year.

The emigration from the British Isles to the United States in 1830 was 30,000; in 1831, 24,000; in 1832, 57,000; and when it is recollected these were almost all adults, the vast additions thus annually made to the population, must lower the American nearly to the British rate of increase.

The greatest proportion of this immense increase has arisen in the manufacturing towns, and the adjoining districts. To illustrate this, two tables are subjoined, extracted from these returns: the first exhibiting the increase in the last thirty years in the rural, the second in the manufacturing counties.

1. Rural Counties.

	Increase from 1801 to 1811.	From 1811 to 1821.	From 1821 to 1831.
Argyle,	19 per cent.	14 per cent.	4 per cent.
Berwick,	1	8	2
Caithness,	4	29	14
Dumfries,	15	13	4
Elgin,	5	11	10
Fife,	8	13	12
Haddington,	4	13	3
Inverness,	5	15	5
Kincardine,	4	5	8
Kirkcudbright,	15	15	4
Linlithgow,	9	17	3
Peebles,	14	1	5
Perth,	7	3	3
Roxburgh,	11	10	7
Stirling,	14	12	11
Sutherland,	2	0	7
Bedford,	11	19	14
Hereford,	5	10	7
Salop,	16	6	8
York, North Riding,	7	11	2
Kent,	21	14	12
Huntingdon,	12	15	9
Montgomery,	8	15	9
Anglesey,	10	21	7
Dorset,	8	16	10
Rutland,	0	13	5
Oxford,	9	15	11
Devon,	12	15	11
Suffolk,	11	15	9
Cambridge,	9	14	9
Average,	9	10½	7

2. Manufacturing Counties.

	Increase from 1801 to 1811.	From 1811 to 1821.	From 1821 to 1831.
Lancaster,	23 per cent.	27	27 per cent.
Monmouth,	36	15	36
Nottingham,	16	15	20
Warwick,	10	20	23
Middlesex,	17	20	19
Leicester,	16	16	18
Chester,	18	19	24
York, West Riding,	16	22	22
..... East Riding,	12	12	17
Durham,	11	17	22
Glamorgan,	18	19	24
Caernarvon,	19	17	15
Carmarthen,	17	15	10
Lanark,	31	27	30
Forfar,	8	6	23
Edinburgh,	21	29	15
Kinross,	8	7	17
Renfrew,	19	21	19
Dumbarton,	17	13	22
Aberdeen,	10	15	14
Stirling,	14	12	11
Flint,	17	15	11
Cardigan,	17	15	10
Brecon,	19	16	10
Ayr,	23	22	14
Banff,	2	19	12
Norfolk,	7	18	13
Surrey,	20	23	22
Sussex,	19	22	17
Stafford,	21	17	19
Average,	16¾	14⅓	18⅓

From this curious and highly interesting table, it appears that in all the three periods, the rate of increase in the manufacturing counties has been *nearly double* that in the rural districts, the numbers being,

	1801–11.	1811–21.	1821–31.
Agricultural rate,	9	10⅓	7
Manufacturing rate,	16¾	14⅓	18

If the manufacturing towns in the rural districts were weeded out of their total population, the rate of increase in the one would be *fully double* that in the other.

APPENDIX, No. II. p. 47.

The increase of the great towns in the empire during the three periods is, if possible, still more striking. The following is their present amount as given by the census of 1831 :—

	1801.	1811.	1821.	1831.
London,	864,000	1,009,000	1,225,000	1,474,000
Edinburgh,	82,560	102,987	138,235	162,403
Glasgow,	77,385	100,749	147,043	202,426
Manchester and suburbs,	94,876	115,874	161,635	237,832
Birmingham,	73,670	85,753	106,721	142,250
Liverpool,	79,722	100,240	131,800	189,919
Plymouth,	43,194	56,060	61,212	75,534
Paisley,	31,179	36,722	47,003	57,466
Aberdeen,	27,608	35,370	44,796	58,019
Newcastle,	36,963	36,369	46,948	57,937
Nottingham,	28,861	34,253	40,415	50,680
Bristol,	63,645	76,433	87,779	103,886
Hull,	34,964	32,437	41,874	49,461
Dundee,	26,084	29,616	30,575	45,355
Norwich,	36,832	37,256	50,288	61,116
Portsmouth.	43,461,	52,577	56,620	63,026

These tables exhibit the vast and fearful increase which has taken place in the urban and manufacturing population of the empire within the last thirty years ; while the agricultural districts during that period have barely added a quarter to their numbers, the metropolis has nearly doubled its population ; Manchester has increased twice and a half ; Glasgow almost tripled ; Edinburgh doubled ; Liverpool more than doubled ; and all the other great towns in nearly the same proportion.

APPENDIX, No. III. p. 52.

To show that the resources of this country, if political circumstances would allow us to get at them, are by no means near their final limit, we subjoin the following calculation :

There are in England,	32,000,000 acres.
in Scotland and Islands,	24,000,000
in Ireland;	24,000,000

Now, supposing that 20,000,000 acres in England alone are arable; 16,000,000 in Ireland; and 5,000,000 in Scotland; setting aside *one-half* of the whole arable land for luxuries, such as butcher's meat, beer, horses, roads, parks, woods, &c.; supposing that one-half of the other half, or a *quarter* of the arable land, is devoted to the staple food of man, and laid out one-half in wheat or grain, and one-half in potatoes, allowing a produce of 24 bushels, or 6 bolls to each acre, recollecting that an acre in potatoes can feed three times as many mouths as an acre of wheat; and that a quarter of grain is the food of a human being for a year; the resources of the three kingdoms will stand thus:

1. England and Wales.

Total area,	32,000,000 acres.	
Mountain and moor,	12,000,000	
Arable,	20,000,000	
One-half for luxuries,	10,000,000	
One-half for staple food, viz.:		
5,000,000 in grain, at 24 bushels, will feed annually,	15,000,000 souls.	
5,000,000 in potatoes, at three times that, will feed annually,	45,000,000	
Might be maintained in England and Wales,	60,000,000	

2. Scotland.

Total area,	24,000,000 acres.	
Deduct for wastes,	19,000,000	
Remains arable,	5,000,000	
One-half for luxuries,	2,500,000	
One-half for staple food,	2,500,000	
Of which one-half for grain, at 24 bushels an acre, will feed annually,	3,750,000 souls.	
One-half in potatoes, at three times that, will feed annually,	11,250,000	
Might be maintained in Scotland,	15,000,000	

3. Ireland.

Total area,	24,000,000 acres.
Deduct mountain and bog,	8,000,000
Remains arable,	16,000,000
Of which one-half for luxuries,	8,000,000
One-half for staple food,	8,000,000
Of which one-half in wheat, at 24 bushels an acre, will feed annually,	12,000,000 souls.
One-half in potatoes, at three times that,	36,000,000
Might be maintained in Ireland,	48,000,000

Abstract.

England at this rate can contain	60,000,000 souls.
Ireland,	48,000,000
Scotland,	15,000,000
The British Islands,	123,000,000
Whereas the numbers by the last census are, for	
Great Britain,	16,400,000
Ireland,	7,800,000
	24,200,000

The prodigious difference between the numbers the British islands actually now contain, and those they are capable of feeding, will startle those who are not accustomed to political calculations; and yet the estimate is founded on grounds which every one acquainted with the subject must consider highly moderate. It proceeds on the supposition that 39,000,000 of acres in the British islands are utterly unproductive; that one-half only of the arable land which remains is devoted to the staple articles of human subsistence; and that the produce of this portion is 24 bushels of grain, or three times that amount of solid nourishment in potatoes; the calculation which is assumed as the basis of all Mr A. Young's and Mr Newenham's calculations on the comparative amount of food yielded by grain crops and by that productive vegetable.

It is needless to say that these numbers are never likely to be realized. It seems the law of Nature, that, ages before a nation

has arrived at the limit of its subsistence, its decay is prepared by a great variety of causes, which, by destroying national virtue, pave the way for national decline. A survey of the fate of all the great empires of antiquity, and a consideration of the close resemblance which the vices and passions by which they were distinguished at the period of the commencement of their decline, bear to those by which we are agitated, leads to the melancholy conclusion that we are fast approaching, if we have not already attained, the utmost limit of our greatness, and that a long decay is destined to precede the fall of the British empire. During that period our population will remain stationary or recede; our courage will perhaps abate; our wealth will certainly diminish; our ascendency will disappear, and at length the Queen of the Waves will sink into an eternal, though not forgotten slumber. It is more likely, than that these islands will ever contain human beings for whom sufficient sustenance cannot be obtained, that its fields will return in the revolutions of society to their pristine desolation, and the forest resume its wonted domain, and savage animals regain their long lost habitations; that a few fishermen will spread their nets on the ruins of Plymouth, and the beaver construct his little dwelling under the arches of Waterloo Bridge; the Towers of York rise in dark magnificence amidst an aged forest; and the red-deer sport in savage independence round the Athenian pillars of the Scottish metropolis.

APPENDIX, No. IV. p. 75.

TABLE showing the Population, Territory, and Proportion per square league of the following countries in 1825.

Countries.	Population in 1825.	Territory in square marine leagues.	Proportion per square league.
America,	34,284,000	1,186,930	29
Russian Empire,	54,000,000	616,000	87
North America,	19,650,000	607,337	32
South America,	12,161,000	571,300	21
Asiatic Russia,	2,000,000	465,600	4
Chinese Empire,	175,000,000	463,200	377
Spanish America,	16,785,000	371,400	45
Europe,	195,000,000	304,700	639
Brazil,	4,000,000	257,000	15
United States,	10,220,000	174,300	58
Russia in Europe,	5,200,000	150,400	345
China Proper,	150,000,000	128,000	1172
Buenos Ayres,	2,300,000	126,800	18
India,	101,000,000	109,200	925
U. S. west of the Mississippi,	366,000	96,600	4
New Spain, with Gratimala,	8,400,000	92,600	95
Colombia,	2,785,000	92,000	30
U. S. east of the Mississippi,	9,404,000	77,700	121
New Grenada,	2,000,000	58,250	34
British India,	73,000,000	90,100	810
Peru,	1,400,000	41,400	34
Sweden and Norway,	3,550,000	39,100	90
Venezuela,	785,000	33,700	25
The 15 States on the Atlantic of the United States,	7,421,000	30,900	240
Austrian Empire,	29,000,000	21,900	1324
Germany,	30,500,000	21,300	1432
Spain and Portugal,	14,619,000	18,150	805
France and Corsica,	30,616,000	17,100	1790
Spain,	11,446,000	15,000	763
Chili,	1,100,000	14,300	76
Italy,	20,100,000	10,240	1967
British Islands,	21,200,800	10,000	2120
Prussia,	11,663,000	8,900	1311
West Indies,	2,500,000	8,300	301
Virginia,	1,065,000	5,400	197
Province of Caraccas,	420,000	5,200	40
England,	12,218,500	4,840	2524
Pennsylvania,	1,049,500	3,900	269
Mexico,	1,770,000	3,800	465
Portugal,	3,173,000	3,150	1007
Switzerland,	1,940,000	1,330	1175
Egypt,	2,489,000	1,400	1737
Galicia,	1,400,000	1,650	1053
Arragon,	660,000	1,230	537
Holland,	2,100,000	900	1330
Valencia,	1,200,000	640	1874
Departments of the Charente in France,	347,000	186	1865

—Humboldt, xi. 57.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

PRINTED BY JOHN STARK, OLD ASSEMBLY CLOSE, EDINBURGH.

00026961

Lab No
314

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016